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# **ESEA Flexibility Request**

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Revised February 10, 2012

U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0708

Paperwork Burden Statement

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS: ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

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Introduction	iii
General Instructions	iv
Table of Contents	1
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request	3
Waivers	4
Assurances	7
Consultation	9
Evaluation	9
Overview of SEA’s ESEA Flexibility Request	9
Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students	10
Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support	12
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership	18
Sample Plan Template	19

## INTRODUCTION

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The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA’s reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This version of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* replaces the document originally issued on September 23, 2011 and revised on September 28, 2011. Through this revised version, the following section has been removed: 3.A, Option B (Option C has been renamed Option B). Additions have also been made to the following sections: Waivers and Assurances. Finally, this revised guidance modifies the following sections: Waivers; Assurances; 2.A.ii; 2.C.i; 2.D.i; 2.E.i; Table 2; 2.G; and 3.A, Options A and B.

**High-Quality Request:** A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA’s plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. **Key milestones and activities:** Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA’s plan to meet a given principle.
2. **Detailed timeline:** A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.
3. **Party or parties responsible:** Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

4. **Evidence:** Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA’s progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.
5. **Resources:** Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.
6. **Significant obstacles:** Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (*e.g.*, State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

**Preparing the Request:** To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions*, which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

**Process for Submitting the Request:** An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>.

***Electronic Submission:*** The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address:  
[ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

***Paper Submission:*** In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

## **REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

SEAs have multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, February 28, 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS**

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department's Web site at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility> for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at [ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA’s flexibility request.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request	
Waivers	
Assurances	
Consultation	
Evaluation	
Overview of SEA’s Request for the ESEA Flexibility	
<b>Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students</b>	
1.A Adopt college- and career-ready standards	
1.B Transition to college- and career-ready standards	
1.C Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth	
<b>Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support</b>	
2.A Develop and implement a State-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support	
2.B Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives	
2.C Reward schools	
2.D Priority schools	
2.E Focus schools	
2.F Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools	
2.G Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning	
<b>Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership</b>	
3.A Develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	
3.B Ensure LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	

**TABLE OF CONTENTS, CONTINUED**

For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

<b>LABEL</b>	<b>LIST OF ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1	Notice to LEAs	
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	



**COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

Legal Name of Requester: Iowa Department of Education.	Requester's Mailing Address: Grimes State Office Building 400 E. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146.
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request  Name: Kevin Fangman.  Position and Office: Deputy Director and Administrator.  Contact's Mailing Address: Grimes State Office Building 400 E. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146  Telephone: 515-281-3333.  Fax: 515-242-5988  Email address: kevin.fangman@iowa.gov.	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Jason Glass.	Telephone: 515-281-3436.
Signature of the Chief State School Officer:  X_____	Date: Click here to enter text.
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

**WAIVERS**

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- ☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- ☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- ☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- ☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- ☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- ☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or

restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State’s priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

- ☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
- ☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
- ☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
- ☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State’s priority schools that meet the definition of “priority schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

- ☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.
- ☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA’s State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all

subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

- ☒ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

**ASSURANCES**

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- ☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- ☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- ☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- ☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
- ☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- ☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- ☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- ☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- ☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- ☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
- ☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

**If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

- ☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

## CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State’s Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

- A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

The Iowa Department of Education convened an internal work team consisting of four work groups (27 individuals) to draft sections of the ESEA Flexibility Request. At varying points during the writing process feedback was solicited.

Stakeholder groups with specific content knowledge were identified and consulted throughout the waiver development process by the four work teams. These included such groups as the Superintendent Advisory Group, the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), the Iowa Council of Administrators in Special Education, the Urban Education Network, as well as superintendents and school board representation from districts recognized as exemplary and those designated persistently lowest achieving.

- A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Feedback was also requested from stakeholder groups in each of Iowa’s Area Education Agencies (AEAs), intermediary education agencies that support education in Iowa. The nine AEAs are state-mandated (IAC Chapter 72) entities legislated to provide support to public and accredited non-public schools in designated boundaries in matters of other educational services, media and technology, and special education. The AEAs were asked to hold meetings in their regions to solicit public input. Two teams of Department staff traveled to each of the nine AEAs. Participants had the choice to attend at the site where the presentations originated, as well as through Polycom and the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). Five short videos were shown, which were also available on the website, providing an overview of the Flexibility Request and detailing each of the three principles. Four to five presentations were held in each AEA including the following stakeholder groups: superintendents, administrators, school board members, students, teachers, parents, community members, supplemental education services (SES) providers, community agencies and organizations. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions of the teams and to provide verbal feedback. In addition, participants were asked to respond to an electronic survey. All survey responses, including those from Local Education Agencies, are contained in Attachment 2.

Following is a list of each stakeholder session held:



## ESEA Flexibility Request Stakeholder Meetings

December 2, 2011	Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)
December 9, 2011	Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education
December 15, 2011	AEA Chiefs
December 16, 2011	AEA Collaborating for Kids Meeting
January 9, 2012	Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), Teachers, Administrators
January 11, 2012	Iowa Core Steering Committee Meeting
January 12, 2012	AEA Director's of Special Education
January 16, 2012	Briefed Executive Director of ISEA
January 19, 2012	Education Committee Meeting (State Capitol)
January 23, 2012	AEA Collaborating for Kids Meeting
January 25, 2012	Iowa Assessment Network (IAN)
January 26, 2012	State Board of Education Meeting
January 27, 2012	AEA Chiefs
January 30, 2012	Iowa Assessment Network (IAN)
January 31, 2012	AEA 267 Regional Meeting*
February 1, 2012	Keystone AEA Regional Meeting*
February 2, 2012	Great Prairie AEA Regional Meeting*
February 3, 2012	Human Rights and Civil Rights Department Directors
February 4, 2012	ISEA Executive Board
February 6, 2012	Department of Education Division Staff Meeting
February 6, 2012	Department of Education Senior Staff
February 6, 2012	Mississippi Bend AEA Regional Meeting*
February 7, 2012	Grant Wood AEA Regional Meeting*
February 7, 2012	Heartland AEA Regional Meeting*
February 8, 2012	SAI Executive Council
February 8, 2012	Green Hills AEA Regional Meeting*
February 9, 2012	Nonpublic Advisory Board Meeting
February 9, 2012	AEA Joint Director's Meeting
February 9, 2012	Northwest AEA Regional Meeting*
February 9, 2012	Prairie Lakes AEA Regional Meeting*
February 10, 2012	Teacher Evaluation Taskforce
February 13, 2012	Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Team and United States Department of Education Program Officer
February 16, 2012	Parent Training Information Center (PITC)
February 22, 2012	SAI Leadership Partnership Committee
February 25, 2012	Teacher Evaluation Taskforce

\*Regional Meetings included Superintendents, Administrators, School Board Members, Students, Teachers, Parents, Community Members, Supplemental Education Services (SES) Providers, and Community Organizations/Business/Board Members.

Changes were made to Iowa's Flexibility Request based on input from stakeholders. These changes are noted within the narrative of each of the principles of the Flexibility Request.



## EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

## OVERVIEW OF SEA’S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA’s request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA’s comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA’s strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA’s and its LEAs’ ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Implementing the requirements of NCLB, especially the equity inherent in the intent of the law, has taught federal and state policy makers, teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and institutions of higher education much about the benefits of accountability systems. Students from subgroups who had been excluded from the accountability system were counted, consistent standards and assessments were developed, and policy was set and monitored to determine if student achievement was increasing as expected. Iowa acknowledges the rigor and equity in NCLB and seeks this waiver to build on that work and create a more informed and unified system of education for all our students.

Therefore, the State of Iowa requests this Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility waiver request being offered by the United State Department of Education to build upon this foundation and to enhance current and develop new and more effective ways of ensuring that (1)our students graduate college- and career-ready, (2) our schools receive the appropriate recognition, accountability, and support, and (3) that every teacher in every classroom and every administrator in every building is a world class educator.

To that end, Iowa will increase the rigor established under NCLB. We will use what has been learned through NCLB and our adoption of the Common Core to strengthen the Iowa Core and curriculum, instruction, and assessment across the state. Growth and other academic indicators for all subgroups will be used to judge performance of school-referenced trajectories toward a state

target. To that end, we will create a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for schools as well as support teachers and administrators through a more comprehensive system of evaluation and professional development.

Our waiver request improves our existing accountability plan by incorporating growth, maintaining determinations at the subgroup level, and reducing the N size of the subgroups. More students are included in the accountability system and more comprehensive supports are articulated for Iowa's schools based on Iowa's needs. Our new system honors the important principles of equity inherent in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, yet recognizes that sanctions only go so far. It gives Iowa more flexibility to support Priority and Needs Improvement (Focus) Schools and creates incentives through the reward school designation.

This request for waiver summarizes Iowa's plan to implement a universal system of school improvement to make sure ALL children in Iowa are growing academically, reaching proficiency, and graduating with the skills needed to compete and succeed in a global economy. A universal school improvement planning process and tool will be utilized and systems of recognition and support implemented to benefit all Iowa schools. Our new system will include multiple robust measures and will transform the current system, promoting collaboration and systemic supports to LEAs and schools in raising achievement and ensuring all students are college- and career-ready.

We seek approval to engage the State's authority to ensure there is a great teacher in every classroom to empower all students to achieve at least one year's growth in one year's time. Specifically, we will develop and implement statewide new guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. Components of this new system will include direct observation, strong consideration of student-outcome measures to validate direct observation behaviors, integration of the InTASC standards and Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL), and system applicability to teachers in all content areas.

These key elements and others within our waiver request create an accountability system capable of helping educators in our state monitor student progress and ensure all Iowa students are prepared to continue their education when they graduate from high school.

Our goal is to make sure that wherever a student in Iowa attends school, he or she receives the supports needed to maximize the opportunity to graduate college- or career-ready and that performance is not based on economic status or predicated on zip code. Iowa is committed to ensuring that each and every child has the right to be counted and supported – for children in all subgroups to be held to an equitable standard of college and career readiness. Further, the commitment of the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) is to support Area Education Agencies (AEA) and districts as they support schools in their important work in shaping the future of Iowa with an educated and productive workforce.

## **PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

## 1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>1. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p>2. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)</p>
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## 1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

### Overview of Principle 1B

Iowa has adopted college- and career-ready standards in reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of states, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. The evidence that the state has adopted the standards, consistent with the state’s standards adoption process is included in Attachment 4. Additionally, this section summarizes the history of standards-based reform in Iowa leading up to adoption of the Common Core in 2010, and describes:

- alignment work done with the Common Core and Iowa Core, the infrastructure in place for assuring teachers and administrators understand and can implement the Common Core,
- how the efforts ensure all teachers in the state understand applying the expectations embedded in the Common Core to students with language-learning needs and students with disabilities,
- specifically how the Common Core will be used to raise expectations for students with disabilities and students with language learning needs,
- how the current and future statewide tests align to college- and career-ready performance,
- enhancing work around teaching and administrative standards and evaluation, and
- the State’s role in strengthening partnerships with Institutes of Higher Education around pre-service preparation and ensuring students leaving Iowa high schools are ready to successfully complete college coursework without remediation.

## Adopting College-and Career-Ready Standards in Iowa

**Building Consensus as a State to Adopt State Standards:** The *United States Constitution* defers most matters of education to states of the Republic; the Iowa Constitution, in turn, defers matter of education to local school boards. Historically decisions about content, instruction, and assessment have been made at the local level. However, the national and international educational landscaped had changed and beginning in the 1990s, we began our own metamorphosis.

- In 1997, the State of Iowa required local school boards to adopt comprehensive standards and benchmarks.
- In 2001, when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized, the requirements for testing and reporting were expanded to include not just one grade at each level of elementary, middle, and high school, but to include all students in Grades 3 through 8, and one grade at the high school level (of which Iowa chose Grade 11).
- When the regulations for what was called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) were released, educational leaders at IDE recognized the need to adopt state standards. However, to honor local control, Iowa developed global content standards to which local standards could be aligned. Iowa adopted
  - a framework called Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks as the state standards to which local schools aligned their local standards, and
  - the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills as the state grade level assessment judged against grade level achievement standards and contracted with the University of Iowa to lead all school districts in the state in an alignment process to align the recently adopted local school board standards, to the State Core Content Standards and Benchmarks.
- In 2005, Iowa passed the Model Core Curriculum—a voluntary effort to further align their local standards to more rigorous high school content standards. The Model Core was designed
  - so that students in Iowa leave school ready to compete in a global economy, and
  - included rigorous, college-and-career ready standards not only in English/language arts and mathematics, but also in science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of health literacy, financial literacy, civic literacy, technology literacy, and employability skills.
 The legislation for the Model Core was expanded in 2007 to include kindergarten through eighth grades in addition to high school.
- In 2009, the state developed universal constructs with the goal that students engage in the Iowa Core so as to become confident and competent at critical thinking, complex communication, creativity, collaboration, flexibility and adaptability, and productivity and accountability. The State provided \$28 million dollars to support schools writing standards aligned to the Model Core, and to teach teachers about the essential concepts and skills embedded in the standards.

- In 2009, the National Governor’s Association and the Council for Chief State School Officers embarked on an effort to create standards that states could adopt, rather than have states expend more resources on standards development. In Iowa, given the resources already put into place around the Iowa Model Core, the Legislative and Executive Branches agreed that rigorous standards were important for Iowa’s school-aged citizens. “Model” was dropped from the legislation, and the Iowa Core was required for all schools in Iowa, starting with implementation plans at the high school level in 2010 and expanding to all grades by 2015.
- In 2010, Iowa adopted the Common Core in literacy and mathematics and added some additional content.
- Throughout this timeframe, states developed state tests and state performance standards against which student performance was measured, but state-to-state comparisons difficult and national standards were planned.
  - Iowa joined the SMARTER Balanced consortium and later became a governing member.

Iowa’s is committed to adoption of and implementation of standards and assessments that will shape instruction in classrooms and result in all students in Iowa leaving school ready for college or career. This commitment is evidenced by our participation and leadership in the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and several assessment consortia in CCSSO, being a member state in the CCSSO sponsored Implementing the Common Core Standards Collaborative, and becoming a governing member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. We are committed to rigorous content standards and fair and meaningful assessment systems designed to help teachers understand learning needs of students, evaluate and differentiate instruction for all learners including high performers, at-risk, language learners, and students with disabilities.

**Alignment of the Common Core and Iowa Core:** An alignment study was commissioned and completed by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) in July 2010 to examine the degree of alignment of the Iowa Core (literacy and mathematics) to the Common Core State Standards (English/Language Arts and Mathematics).

The Achieve organization (<http://achieve.org/>), an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C., developed a web-based alignment tool along with support documentation that was used to examine the alignment of the Iowa Core with the Common Core State Standards. The alignment tool was used to answer 3 questions:

- What is the degree of alignment between the Iowa Core and the Common Core?
- What portions of the Common Core are not covered by anything from the Iowa Core, and
- What portions of the Iowa Core are not matched to anything in the Common Core?

We examined alignment in two content areas, English/language arts (ELA) and mathematics, going in two directions, Iowa Core aligned to Common Core (what standards do we need to adopt that we don’t have?) and Common Core aligned to Iowa Core (how many of our unique standards can we keep without compromising alignment to the Common Core?).

The Iowa Core Standards matched 93% of the Common Core in ELA and 84% in mathematics. The information from the study was used to assure Iowa educators that the course that was set with the adoption of the essential concepts and skills of Iowa Core in 2008 was consistent with that articulated through the Common Core State Standards. Also, the results of the study were

used to inform the decision-making process regarding Iowa’s additional 15 %, the allowance given each state for the inclusion of additional standards. After identifying content included in the Iowa Core but missing in the Common Core, panels of teachers, administrators, and area education agency consultants were convened to assist IDE in identifying its additional standards. We have fully adopted the 7% of ELA standards in the Common Core not in the Iowa Core, and the 16% of mathematics standards in the Common Core not in the Iowa Core. In addition, the Iowa Core contained 12% unique standards beyond the Common Core for both ELA and mathematics, and Iowa has kept those standards as the allowed additions to the Common Core

**Training Teachers on the Standards:** In order to ensure all schools in the state have the resources needed to successfully implement the Iowa Core, IDE in collaboration with the Area Education Agencies (AEA) developed the Iowa Core Network. AEAs are intermediate service agencies that provide much of the professional development to educators in Iowa. The Network has administrators, content experts, school improvement specialists, and professional developers from each of Iowa’s AEAs. The Network is instrumental in assisting districts to develop and implement Iowa Core Implementation Plans. Teams from each AEA work with each school district in the state to ensure teachers and administrators have the information they need to effectively implement the Iowa Core. This network has been in place since 2009, and will be used to support training all teachers in the state about ensuring students learn the grade level standards through high quality instruction. Input from teachers as part of this waiver process suggests that schools in Iowa have engaged in understanding and unpacking the standards to varying degrees. About half of teachers report knowledge of the Core and a beginning level of awareness, the other half report little engagement yet with the Iowa Core and Common Core. Some teachers do report deep knowledge of the Core.

In addition, schools and AEAs report that teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of students who are English-Language Learners are being trained on the standards as part of school faculty, not in “separate” training, because schools are committed to “all students being general education students.”

To support school district’s Iowa Core Implementation Plans, IDE, in collaboration with the Iowa Core Network, is developing professional development materials that focus on engaging all classroom teachers in developing a deep understanding of the college- and career-ready standards in the Iowa Core. Additionally, professional development modules and materials have been developed for collaborative learning teams to study, practice, and implement formative assessment practices in instruction, which have been shown to reduce the learning gap for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and low achieving students.

All of these professional development materials are stored on the Iowa Core Statewide Resources Moodle site, which was developed by the Iowa Core Network. The Moodle platform was chosen because it is available to all AEAs and LEAs and has the capacity to grow as more Iowa Core resources are developed. Included on the site are research briefs and literature reviews, professional development protocols, video segments, discussion guides, and organized learning sequences. Information and resources including podcast, video tutorials, online modules, and additional collaborative learning team professional development learning sequences and agendas will continue to be added to the site as they are developed.



Since the summer of 2011, Iowa has been working with Comprehensive Education Service Agency 7 (CESA 7) from Green Bay, Wisconsin. Iowa purchased the rights to a framework for unpacking the standards and then adapted them for use in our state by educators. Using this framework, IDE collaborated with the AEAs in developing a series of professional development opportunities called “Investigating the Standards for Iowa Core Mathematics and Iowa Core English Language Arts”. The purpose for the investigations is to teach administrators and teachers how to navigate the standards documents, learning the structure and content. Training of these professional development modules has been delivered to the Iowa Content Leadership Teams, which comprises invited representatives of higher education, each AEA in the state, and the eight urban districts in Iowa. AEA content leaders in ELA and mathematics have been trained on unpacking the standards.

Qualitative data from these trainings suggest enthusiasm for the content, importance of the content, and high likelihood that helping teachers understand standards will impact achievement. In addition, results from surveys and public meetings to elicit input on this waiver, indicate a need for this kind of training. The unpacking of the standards has put the state in a good position to support teachers in Iowa in understanding the standards beginning in the 2011-2012 school year and continuing in 2012-2013 as described below.

The framework for IDE to coordinate training with AEAs and schools is through a Content Leadership Team. The team has representation from IDE, AEAs, and LEAs. Content Leadership Team workgroups are developing the materials and timeline on how these sessions will be delivered to LEAs throughout the state beginning in spring 2012. The materials will provide consistent professional learning opportunities for Iowa classroom teachers. It is expected that these Content Leadership Team from each AEA will support and monitor the implementation of the Iowa Core Standards. The Content Leadership Team has also developed a module for building administrators on understanding the standards and how to support teachers in implementing the standards. This module will be trained beginning in April of 2012, with the intent of all building administrators in Iowa being trained by end of school year 2012-2013.

Additional training on unpacking the standards is being supported in Iowa by an independent, non-profit assessment consortium called Mid-Iowa School Improvement Consortia (MISIC). MISIC purchased the unpacking the standards software from CESA 7 to assist in the independent of work being done by IDE and the AEAs. Four of Iowa’s nine AEAs belong to MISIC, as well as 148 other K-12 entities including public schools, accredited non-public schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and residential treatment facilities. MISIC leadership dialogues with and collaborates with IDE and AEAs to ensure consistent messaging throughout Iowa. Hence, in addition to training on standards provided by IDE and AEAs, some local schools will receive additional support through their membership with MISIC.

**Universal Design for Learning:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a validated practice for providing all students with multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement. The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) is recognized as the national leader in promoting and supporting UDL.

Iowa has engaged in consultation with CAST for at least the last 10 years. Most recently, Iowa contracted with CAST to train AEA managers and leaders on UDL. Prior to that, Iowa

contracted with CAST to train the Assistive Technology Team leaders in the state on UDL. Principles of UDL have also been incorporated into the characteristics of effective instruction of the Iowa Core: teaching for understanding, teaching for learner differences, rigor and relevance, student-centered classrooms, and assessment for learning

The Iowa Core Content Leaders and the Response to Intervention workgroups all have members trained in UDL, who know that incorporating UDL principles into their respective work is efficient and effective. If these teams need additional support around UDL, a new contract with CAST will be implemented.

Also a cadre of AEAs is piloting training in UDL in three regions of Iowa in order to actively work together to construct knowledge about teaching and learning using the principles of UDL, which are embedded in the characteristics of effective instruction of the Iowa Core Curriculum. Their work can be used to inform generalization of UDL practices at the classroom level. The cadre supports a systemic approach to develop collective responsibility for all students through intensive professional development, coaching and collaboration with our district partners in the context of their communities.

Three AEAs are entering into a collaborative relationship for the purpose of promoting and establishing a high level of implementation of the UDL framework in their local schools. This collaborative effort will allow combining resources in effective and efficient ways to promote a common, clearly defined vision; focus efforts in coordinated ways, and develop clear definitions, guidelines, and criteria for strategic planning, implementation and monitoring efforts. The collaborative planning approach will also allow for efficient development and sharing of instructional planning tools, templates, and models, and will provide a vehicle for communication and support.

By “scaling up” the implementation of UDL across the three AEAs, all educators will have the strategies, tools, and instructional materials they need to effectively address the diverse learners in their classrooms thereby increasing learning outcomes. The AEAs have a three-year plan to support one urban, one medium, and one small sized district, integrate UDL into everyday practice of schools. After year three, a plan for further scale-up to more schools within those three AEAs, and the other six AEAs, will be implemented.

### **Addressing Language Learning Needs, Cultural Differences, and Students with Disabilities**

**Training of Teachers of Students with Language Learning Needs on the Iowa Core:** The number of students in Iowa identified as eligible for Title III support (English Language Learners) has increased in Iowa since 2001:

- 2000-2001—62 of 374 districts reported 11,248 students as English Language Learners (2.29%)
- 2010-2011—81 of 359 districts reported 21,733 students as English Language Learners (4.38%).

Student achievement data for Iowa’s ELLs includes:

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills



- High participate rates (>98%) and
- 30% to 60% proficient, depending on grade level and content area assessed
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011)
  - Grade 4 Reading—ELLs
    - included appropriately,
    - 65% below basic,
    - 28% basic,
    - 7% proficient, and
    - 0% advanced.
  - Grade 4 Reading—students not in ELL programs
    - 29% below basic,
    - 36% basic,
    - 28% proficient, and
    - 7% advanced.

Iowa has a network of educators dealing with ELL supports for ten years. Each AEA and large school district has a designated consultant to organize ELL efforts in that region. The network determines what work needs to be done and how best to get the work done, given the unique composition of each region (e.g. rural, urban, sparsely or densely populated). They promoted evidence-based practices and ensured appropriate testing and that the ELL Content Standards are appropriately aligned to the Iowa Core.

In most Iowa schools, teachers of students with language learning needs and teachers of students with disabilities are being trained on the Iowa Core with all other faculty in that building. The ELL network determines what supplemental training is needed and how to best deliver that training to the teachers of students with language learning needs in their respective regions.

**Understanding Needs of Teachers of Students with Disabilities:** The data markers for students with disabilities in Iowa are mixed. School-aged indicators for Iowa’s annual performance report include the following data:

- Iowa has modest to high graduation rates for students with disabilities—80% in 2008-2009, for the 4-year cohort rate, below the target of 91%, most regions increasing over time,
- high dropout rates—4 year cohort rate in 2008-2009 of 19%, above a state target of 14% with most regions reporting higher than targeted rates for drop-out,
- high participation rates—historically above 99% all grades in reading and math,
- low performance rates—between 24% and 45% proficient in reading and math depending on grade level, well below state targets of 70% proficient or higher,
- few districts suspending students with disabilities at high rates,
- modest inclusion rates—60% of students in general education at least 80% of the school day,
- low exclusion rates—8% of students in general education less than 40% of the school day,
- reasonable outcomes upon preschool exit,
- modest rates of parent satisfaction—80%,
- low rates of disproportionality,

- children being evaluated within 60-days of consent being received by the public agency,
- high rates of children transitioning from Part C to Part B in timely manner,
- modest numbers of IEP goals for students aged 14 or higher that include appropriate post-secondary goals—trending upward from 2005 to 60% in 2008-2009 but well below the goal of 100%,
- high percentages of students competitively employed or enrolled in post-secondary education within one-year of leaving high school—84% in 2008-2009),
- noncompliance being identified and corrected,
- few due process hearings or mediations, and
- 100% compliance for federal reporting.

IDE has developed standards of practice against which schools and AEAs can be judged and where data help schools and AEAs understand their instructional needs.

Iowa expects 100% of school buildings to have at least 80% of students proficient in reading and math (currently 39.8% of buildings using reading proficiency on the Iowa Tests with proficiency set at the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile, pre-waiver levels). The State will require schools to analyze performance to judge if students who are not proficient are primarily from a different ethnicity or have language learning needs, which suggest that universal instruction is not sufficiently developed to address cultural differences or differences in prior exposure to middle-class academic language. In addition, the State is requiring schools whose IEP identification rates exceed 10%, to examine the extent to which targeted interventions are provided as part of the general education program, or if IDEA is being used as a supplementary resource for students who are low performers but not really disabled. Lastly, the State is requiring grade-reference IEP goals and evidence that goals are being monitored to support instructional changes when needed.

**Training of Teachers of Students with Disabilities on the Iowa Core:** During the process of preparing for this waiver application, Iowa sought input from multiple stakeholders on understanding and addressing needs of students with disabilities. The AEA Directors of Special Education (N=9), Directors of Special Education from local school districts including urban, suburban, and rural (N=30), Special Education Advisory Panel (N=26), and teachers of students with disabilities, including teachers of students with the most significant disabilities (N=40), were asked for suggestions on **(1)** why Iowa's achievement gap between students with and without disabilities was among the largest in the country, **(2)** what evidence-based practices were being implemented in schools, **(3)** what Iowa's special education teachers knew about the Iowa Core, **(4)** how the SEA could better support training in the Iowa Core, and **(5)** how Iowa might consider monitoring accommodations for students with disabilities.

#### Stakeholder Input

#### 1. **Iowa's Achievement Gap.** According to Iowa's latest Annual Performance Report to the Office of Special Education Programs (February 1, 2012),

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills
  - 36% of students with disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11 were proficient in reading on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
  - 42% were proficient in math,
  - Low inclusion rate—only 30% of students are assessed with accommodations, and
  - about 80% of students *without* disabilities are proficient in both reading and

math.

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—2009
  - 80% of students with disabilities in Grade 4 reading scored below basic,
  - high inclusion rate:
    - 78% of students with disabilities in Grade 4 assessed with accommodations

Educators in Iowa speculate that, Iowa’s average low performance of students with disabilities is due to:

Stakeholder Input
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- low expectations,
- general educators’ need of more skill in differentiation for students with disabilities included in general education,
- special educators’ needing more skill in content standards,
- balancing inclusion in grade level core with direct instruction to remediate skills,
- emphasis on work completion and credit completion over closing the gap, for high school aged students,
- identifying students too late,
- identifying students who are low performers but may not be disabled, hence watering down resources available to students with “real” disabilities,
- inefficient early literacy programs in which too many children are not achieving, and using special education as a support once children fall too far behind, and
- ineffective implementation of co-teaching and teachers not qualified to teach content areas to students with disabilities.

- 2. Evidence-based Practices:** Iowa is currently engaged in a statewide effort to produce students competitive on the national and internationally level. *One Unshakable Vision: World Class Schools for Iowa* (October 2011) <http://tiny.cc/OneVision> followed Iowa’s unprecedented Education Summit (July 2011) and concurrent report entitled: *Rising to Greatness: An Imperative for Improving Iowa’s Schools* <http://tiny.cc/RisingtoGreatness>. Iowa educational leaders have worked with stakeholder groups to build commitment for system reform to transform education for students through high standards and rigorous assessments, quality teachers and administrators, and innovation. This waiver incorporates the work already evolving in the state.

Iowa’s Executive and Legislative Branches are working to legislate and fund many of the components needed to successfully implement activities in this waiver. One bold step included in the Governor’s vision is an effort to ensure all students leave third grade reading at grade level. The research from the Florida Reading Center and Florida’s early literacy effort has been studied extensively. Teachers PreK-Grade 3 will need reasonable class sizes, universal screening tools predictive of reading success, and tiered levels of effective reading strategies to ensure all children in Iowa have the supports and instruction they need to be readers. In addition, the State must provide standards of practice around reading materials and instructional engagement and support teachers with diagnostic tools and frameworks to understand reading problems and have the skills needed to differentiate for all learners to promote reading comprehension. Having proficient readers by Grade 3 drastically changes the landscape for teachers in Grade 4 and beyond, where

the focus can be on deeper understanding of content. IDE will work with stakeholder groups to ensure that the system is working together for children in Iowa, rather than in competition.

Iowa's work to date on the Iowa Core and Iowa's renewed commitment to high levels of implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in all schools in the state, starting with elementary reading, reflect the policy and resource decisions at the state level that promote high levels of learning for all children in the state.

The professional literature also describes effective ways to judge teacher effectiveness. For example, value-added measures, which were recently considered innovative, are now considered as part of a fair and rigorous accountability systems. (For more detail, see *Value-Added Assessment: An Accountability Revolution* in Marci Kanstoroom and Chester E. Finn, Jr. (Eds.), *Better Teachers, Better Schools*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1999).

Value-added models have been implemented in several states. The general idea is to assess students' most recent achievement gains and compare the gains to average gains achieved in prior growth periods. Teachers whose groups of students in general exceeded the growth obtained in the past, have "added value" to the achievement of students. Iowa's move to an interval level growth metric is amenable to application of value-added models into teacher evaluation systems and state accountability and evaluation systems. Value-added models are important to investigate and thoughtfully incorporate into accountability systems because emerging evidence suggests value-added models remove bias of social influences and economic advantage, and add information about educational quality in classrooms, sites, even states. Iowa plans to add value-added into its accountability framework in 2013-14. These data will be the growth component as described in Principle 2 to be used in AYP determinations in 2014.

Educators reported that practices impacting achievement of students with disabilities at some sites in Iowa include:

- Response to Intervention,
- Positive Behavior Supports,
- direct instruction,
- co-teaching,
- coaching and consultation,
- Content Enhancement,
- using published supplemental curricular materials combined with effective classroom instruction, in both general education and special education settings,
- providing high school students with two paid work experience internships to increase employability after high school, and
- one school was successful with setting expectations that core instruction be enhance until at least 80% of students are successful without supplemental supports, that evidence-based targeted supports in general education are available to all students and that students with disabilities are exited from services when they can succeed in general education with our without accommodations.

Stakeholder Input

Reported barriers to implementing effective practices included:

- time,
- competing demands on paperwork,
- competing demands on professional development,
- a push for inclusion without considering effect,
- low expectations of others in the system, and
- lack of available work experiences in every school district in Iowa for every transition-aged student.

- 3. Special Educator Knowledge about the Iowa Core:** Teachers and administrators reported a dichotomous finding in terms of knowledge of Special Educators of the Iowa Core. In about half the schools represented, work on unpacking the standards has been an integral part of the district’s professional development efforts for at least three years, and special education teachers have been included with all teachers in training. In about half the schools represented, work on understanding the Iowa Core has been at a minimal level, for both general educators and special educators. Teachers of students with disabilities at some of Iowa’s largest schools reported a basic level of exposure to the Iowa Core but not an in-depth understanding nor the application of the Iowa Core to their daily practices.

Stakeholder Input

- 4. State Support of Understanding the Core:** Educators reported they prefer the Iowa Core Network train leaders in schools including partners from the AEAs, on understanding the Iowa Core, with the expectation that schools use their Iowa Core plans to describe how the school leaders and AEA support staff will then train all teachers in a school, including teachers of students with disabilities and paraprofessional staff, on aligning lessons to grade level content standards, characteristics of effective instruction—including formative assessment, and data-based decision making. The current infrastructure and action plan of the Iowa Core Network is consistent with what was described by school leaders and teachers of how the State should support understanding of the Iowa Core. The teachers reporting the most knowledge of the Iowa Core are in schools using Professional Learning Communities.

Stakeholder Input

- 5. Assessing Accommodations:** Iowa educators comments about being required to validate accommodations were mixed. There was consensus that most accommodations are simply laundry lists of things that *might* be implemented, but understanding what has been implemented and its effect has not been done in the state. Other research in which the state was involved validated these concerns.

Stakeholder Input

Teachers and administrators, in our survey, also reported being unsure of the value of ensuring that accommodations are being implemented. They offered several suggestions on how we might monitor accommodations as a state. For example, Iowa’s current statewide, web-based IEP program already has a field in which accommodations needed for the child to access the general curriculum are listed as well as the accommodations needed during state or district wide assessments. The Special Education Advisory Panel

suggested that the SEA provide validated accommodations as a link from the web-based IEP program, that the SEA work with the AEA system to train teachers to select one or two accommodations and implement the accommodation well rather than list any accommodation that might be used. Then, to validate the use of accommodation, the SEA could implement any of: (a) survey the student, (b) having the IEP team indicate the following year at the annual review if the accommodation was used and how effective it was, and adding a field to the web-based IEP form to document the team's decision, or (c) having administrators trained to observe for accommodations during teacher evaluations.

Efficiently selecting accommodations and monitoring implementation will be tasked to SEA work group. We will work to put in basic monitoring of accommodations and technical assistance around selecting effective accommodations, but the SEA will direct the field to focus most of their energy and resource around standards-based IEPs and evidence-based practices in doses large enough to matter.

**Ensuring High Standards for Students with Disabilities:** Most recent NAEP data shows Iowa has one of the largest gaps between students with and without disabilities, among all states and territories. Iowa's leaders in Special Education, including Iowa's Special Education Advisory Panel, speculate that low standards and separate curriculum are impacting performance of students with disabilities in the state. As a result of work through the General Supervision Enhancement Grant Iowa received in 2007 to support development of an alternate assessment with modified achievement standards, Iowa is building compliance monitoring around:

- 100% of IEP goals aligned to grade level content and grade level performance standards,
- 100% of IEP goals having evidence of sufficient monitoring of progress and use of data to change instruction, and
- 100% of IEPs having evidence that services provided are evidence-based and sufficient for significantly impacting attainment of grade level performance.

We anticipate training will be ready statewide by 2014 and plan to align this work with the intensive interventions and valid progress monitoring of RtI.

**Supporting Teachers of Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities:** The State is also working with the Special Education Advisory Panel and leaders in special education in the state around standards-based IEPs. The State expects 100% of IEP goals to be grade referenced with evidence that data are being used to change instruction and that the programs and services on IEPs are evidence-based and provided in time consistent with research.

The State is working with AEAs to develop data-analysis tools and technical assistance to schools around improving IEP goals, using data, and effective instructional strategies. The state Special Education Mega-Conference in June 2012 will have the theme, "Pursuing the Promise," and will highlight evidence-based instructional practices. Technical assistance to AEAs in 2012 and beyond will be on effective strategies and on instructional coaching, so that Iowa's AEA itinerant staff has the skills they need to support teachers in local schools.



We will work with the Iowa Core Network to ensure that teachers of students with disabilities are included in understanding the Iowa Core. This work has already been started in Iowa, but, as stated above about half the field is not yet engaged in work that supports deep knowledge of the Iowa Core. We will work with AEAs and school leaders on selecting evidence-based practices on which the entire state will be trained (AEA staff and teachers of students with disabilities). In 2012-2013 we will study achievement and identify sites with high achievement and organize professional development, and in 2013-2014 we will support literacy and post-secondary transition efforts for students with disabilities, as part of the renewed commitment to and expectation of high implementation of RtI statewide. For a detailed timeline see Appendix 1-A.

**Supporting Teachers of Students with Significant Disabilities:** Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (.6%) are expected to have instruction in grade level content but have performance judged against alternate achievement standards. Iowa has an approved Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (i.e. 7%) and has aligned its alternate assessment to Iowa's Common Core Standards. Iowa has a Significant Disabilities Statewide Leadership Team (since 1998) that study data trends on the alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards to enhance rigor of the assessment and determine professional development needs of Iowa's teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The Significant Disabilities State Leadership Group (N=30) represents administrators, teachers, AEA staff, and institutes of higher education from across the state. This group was also surveyed about extent to which teachers understand the Iowa Core. Since 2006 Iowa's alternative assessment has focused on grade level content with alternative achievement standards, most teachers of students with significant disabilities have been working with grade level standards for several years. The State has provided support around child-based programming, grade level content, modified lessons, and assessing performance, since 2008. The Significant Disabilities State Leadership Group felt that the structure in place for teachers of students with significant disabilities could be extended to teachers of students with mild to moderate disabilities and that most teachers of students with significant disabilities have been engaged in unpacking the standards for at least two or three years.

The Iowa Core is appropriately aligned for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Iowa has historically been committed to ensuring all students have access to, participate in, and demonstrate performance of the general curriculum through learning progressions of skills ranging from least-to-most complex, so that every student in the state is being taught grade level academic content. This includes the small percentage of students who have their performance judged against alternate achievement standards through the Iowa Alternate Assessment 1%. This commitment to ensuring the general curriculum for ALL students is evident in that Iowa has never legislated, adopted extended or functional standards, or sanctioned a separate curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

With the adoption of the Common Core, and the need to ensure alignment between the Iowa Core and the Iowa Alternate Assessment 1%, Iowa joined the Dynamic Learning

Maps (DLM) Consortium in the development of a Next Generation Alternate Assessment through the General Supervision Enhancement Grant Race-to-the-Top Alternate Assessment with Alternate Achievement Standards. Iowa will use the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years as a bridge to the DLM Next Generation Alternate Assessment by supporting DLM Consortium activities, study growth in its current alternate assessment, and introduce and provide training to Iowa's educational stakeholders on the Common Core Essential Elements, which are specific statements of the content and skills that are linked to the Common Core Standards grade level specific expectations for students with significant disabilities. The Iowa Significant Disabilities State Leadership Team will study current and future alternate assessment processes, plan for new assessment requirements, and create a state-wide professional development infrastructure that will support future Iowa Core and DLM professional learning opportunities for educators of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

### **Enhancing Instruction through Response to Intervention**

Iowa is restructuring assessments from kindergarten through high school to enable educators to align instructional practices with student needs through a comprehensive, coordinated effort for schools in Iowa to implement the multi-tiered system Response to Intervention (RtI). IDE is actively managing introducing RtI statewide, with consistent expectations around evidence-based screening, instruction, and progress monitoring tools. The RtI effort, which is described throughout Principles 1 and 2 of this waiver application, is fueled by examination of all student achievement data and subgroup performance. The data show that:

- schools need to improve universal instruction,
- an unknown extent and effect of targeted instruction for students at risk,
- low levels of achievement by students with disabilities, and
- not enough Iowa students, including students belonging to subgroups, leave school college-or career-ready.

RtI is not new to Iowa; many in the professional literature attribute evolution of RtI to work in Iowa that began in the 1980s. RtI is a data-based decision –making framework proven in reading and mathematics, with strong evidence of effect at the elementary school level. Through universal screening data gathered at least three times per year, teacher and school data teams have information about the general effectiveness of universal instruction for all students. Depending on the data, either universal instruction is enhanced through pre-teaching, multiple means of representation, or other evidence-based practice with known effect at the classroom level, or evidence-based targeted interventions are provided for some students whose data suggest a need for more instructional support. Importantly, RtI is an initiative that aligns with the College and Career-Ready Standards of the Iowa Core and is part of a school's general education program.

Iowa began its work in RtI as a means for nontraditional identification of students with disabilities. In the 1990s, the professional staff members in Iowa who knew most about RtI were in the AEAs, and worked in the area of special education. In response to the newly approved NCLB Act, the RtI language proposed in IDEA, and the need to assist students who were struggling in general education, Iowa began a more widespread, state-led implementation of RtI in April of 2003 when we developed a process we called Instructional Decision Making (IDM).



During the summer of 2003, over 40 general educators, special educators, and administrators from across Iowa came together to create and articulate essential components of the IDM process: instruction and assessment. A manual was created and distributed to the assigned lead contact person at each AEA. From August 2003 to 2011, over 120 school buildings in Iowa received training in IDM.

However, given that AEAs varied in their capacity to support IDM and Iowa’s history of local decision making around curriculum, assessment, and instruction, IDM was implemented vary differently at every school site. In addition, IDE supported RtI as a discretionary practice that schools and AEAs could opt in and out of, part of a “menu” of supports available. Some AEAs, having more infrastructure around RtI, chose to train components of IDM differently from what was being promoted at the state level, and some AEAs, having less capacity and experience with RtI, had challenges supporting their LEAs that were engaged in IDM.

While the National RtI Center considers Iowa an “implementer of RtI,” we have little evidence how widespread RtI is statewide, and we have only pockets of schools that have been successful in integrating IDM into their daily practice. Part of the problem with scale-up is that the AEAs have varied in their capacity to support implementation. School leadership is also a factor, and the IDM training may not have targeted leadership development sufficiently. Finally, IDM was viewed in Iowa as a special education initiative, meaning the credibility of the IDM trainers to impact general education was not there.

As regions in Iowa described their successes with RtI, districts and states nationwide began implementing RtI. Iowa, having had the advantage of helping others not make the same mistakes, now has the advantage of learning from others nationally on how to make RtI “take” statewide. Since RtI is part of the Governor’s Blueprint on Education, we now have the high visibility at the State level which has been proven to be a key factor in statewide implementation. In addition, the significance of RtI as a general education initiative and a collaborative of all educators in this waiver is further evidence of how we are managing RtI differently.

In addition, the State has developed a management structure that is defining the roles of the IDE, AEAs, and LEAs in implementing RtI. Leaders in IDE, AEAs, local schools, and other key education stakeholders (e.g. School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Association of School Boards) are working together to define roles in supporting RtI. A statewide implementation team with IDE and AEA representation (and plans to expand to schools, parent organizations, and other stakeholders) is overseeing work around standard indicators of “healthy” systems, core/targeted practices in reading that are evidence-based, valid screening and progress monitoring tools, communication, leadership, and data systems. The State is working together on implementation, agreeing to consistency in implementation.

The IDE Bureau of Teaching and Learning is involved to develop universal instruction. IDE’s Bureau of Student and Family Support Services works with AEAs and LEAs concerning students getting interventions including for how long and with what effect. School Improvement and Accreditation Bureau at IDE will be monitoring components of RtI as part of school improvement visits. They will be investigating the effectiveness of core instruction, if data suggest large numbers of students were not achieving well in universal instruction, if targeted supports were evidence-based and included as part of general education efforts, and if students with IEPs have ambitious goals, and if teams of people using data to make instructional decisions for the good of and children.

The State will use the data markers in this waiver, and others as the need becomes evident and they are collected and made available, to create “dashboards” for schools, AEAs, and the State to know:

- extent to which buildings are using valid screening tools,
- percentage of buildings in the state with a minimum proficiency of 80%,
- percentage of buildings with evidence of rigorous targeted supports provided as part of the general education program,
- percentages of students in each of the achievement grid described in this waiver, and
- the extent to which children who are not making a year’s worth of growth have evidence-based targeted supports.

Other measures of implementation, such as having a data team and use of professional learning communities, or faculty buy-in around change, will be considered based on the research base and the cost associated with gathering data on every building in the state.

Markers of successful implementation of RtI are being developed by an RtI work team. The State has some markers of successful implementation of RtI and current performance on these markers:

- 100% of school districts have engaged in quality alignment work to ensure the intended curriculum is enacted—currently at 47% of public school districts,
- 100% of school buildings having valid universal screening tools in reading, math, and behavior—currently at 63% of elementary school buildings,
- 100% of school buildings have 80% of students or more proficient—currently 38.9% of school buildings in the state in reading,
- 100% of school buildings have rigorous, targeted intervention support as part of their general education program—currently 27% of buildings in the state, and
- 100% of goals on Individualized Education Programs being grade referenced with evidence of progress monitored and instructional changes made based on data—currently at 65% statewide in Grades 3 and 4 reading.

Implementing RtI as a state will require state-led and state-supported training on understanding the standards, using data to understand the effectiveness of local instructional practices, and evidence-based practices to supplement universal instruction, provide targeted interventions that will impact learning, and for some students, provide intensive instruction designed to get *all* students to the performance level needed to engage grade level content and be successful on grade level achievement standards.

### **Alignment of Achievement Tests to College- and Career-Ready Standards**

As a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium’s (SBAC) Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning Work Group, the Iowa Department of Education will assist in the development of formative tools and processes that will support teachers to guide all students, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students to meet the expectations of the college-and career-ready standards in the Common Core and Iowa Core. Included in the tools and processes will be professional development resources for teachers in the use of data to inform instructional decisions,

assessment literacy, and how specifically to collect and use information about student success in acquisition of the content embedded in the college-and career-ready standards.

The tools and processes developed by the SBAC Work Group will be used by teachers and students to (1) diagnose student's learning needs from information collected through summative, interim, and formative assessment, (2) check for misconceptions, and/or (3) provide evidence of progress toward learning goals. Among the tools to be developed by this work group is an Interactive Digital Library for professional development. The Digital Library will be an interactive teacher professional development tool to monitor professional learning goals and will include documents, videos, guides, samples of summative and interim tests, model student responses and links to external resources. Discussion forums and self-reflections can be captured in the system to support deeper application of pedagogy and to capture portfolios of evidence that teachers could use as part of an evaluation system in which impact on student learning is assessed and upon which teacher certification is based.

In addition to the work in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, Iowa has adopted the Common Core Standards (i.e., Iowa Core) and will be moving from the Iowa Assessments<sup>®</sup> (formerly known as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills ITBS and Iowa Tests of Educational Development ITEDs) to the SMARTER Balanced assessments by the year 2014 for grades 3 - 8.

As the work evolves from 2011-2012 to 2013-2014, both proposed tests (Iowa Assessments in the interim and the SMARTER Balanced when ready) are aligned with the college- and career-ready standards of the Common Core and the additional college- and career-ready standards carried over from the Iowa Core.

Currently, the State of Iowa uses the Iowa Assessments<sup>®</sup> from the Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa to meet the testing requirements in the Iowa Accountability Plan. Iowa Testing Programs has gone through a process of aligning the Iowa Assessments to the Common Core Standards, including college- and career-ready standards, through the use of an adaptation of the research-based Webb alignment strategy. The following tables illustrate the alignment between the Iowa Assessments<sup>®</sup> and the Common Core Standards. Figure 1.B.1 summarizes alignment between the Common Core and Iowa Tests in English-Language Arts, while Figure 1.B.2 summarizes alignment between the Common Core and Iowa Tests in mathematics.

Figure 1.B.1: Alignment between Common Core ELA Standards and Iowa Tests by Grade

Domain	Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	HS
Reading							
Key Ideas & Details	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Craft & Structure	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Range of Reading & Level of Text Complexity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Language							
Conventions of Standard English	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Knowledge of Language	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vocabulary Acquisition & Use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Key:**  
**X** = Iowa Assessments  
**Shading** = Common Core  
**X/Shading** = alignment

Source: Iowa Testing Programs, Assessment Brief – Alignment

All domains in ELA of the Common Core are adequately assessed at all grades.

Figure 1.B.2: Alignment between Common Core Mathematics Standards and Iowa Tests by Grade

Domain	Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	HS
Counting and Cardinality	X	X	X				
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	X	X	X				
Number and Operations in Base 10	X	X	X				
Number and Operations – Fractions	X	X	X				
Measurement and Data	X	X	X				
Geometry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ratios and Proportional Relationships				X	X		
The Number System				X	X	X	
Expressions and Equations				X	X	X	
Statistics and Probability				X	X	X	X
Functions						X	X
Number and Quantity							X
Algebra							X

**Key:**  
**X** = Iowa Assessments  
**Shading** = Common Core  
**X/Shading** = alignment

Source: Iowa Testing Programs, Assessment Brief – Alignment

As reflected in Figure 1.B.2, depending on the grade, certain content domains in mathematics are aligned to the content sampled in the Iowa Tests for that grade.

### Alignment of Achievement Tests to College- and Career-Ready Performance Standards

ACT has long defined college and career readiness as the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school) without the need for remediation. ACT's definition of college and career readiness was adopted by the Common Core State Standards Initiative and provides a unifying goal upon which educators and policymakers must now act.

College- and career-ready means the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at a postsecondary institution without the need for remediation. The ACT is a college-admissions test. Pearson, publisher of the ACT, reports that the following cut scores on the ACT test, by subject, are considered to represent college and career readiness:

- English – 18
- Reading – 21
- Mathematics – 22
- Science – 24

Scores on individual Iowa Assessments have been mapped to the above targets of readiness on the ACT test and can be linked back from Grade 11 to Grade 5 (Iowa Testing Program, Assessment Brief – Readiness). According to Welch and Dunbar (2011), the following 11<sup>th</sup> grade National Percentile Ranks on the Iowa Tests represent readiness:

- English – 64
- Reading – 74
- Math – 81
- Science – 87

Iowa Testing completed additional studies to determine if test results prior to Grade 11 could be used to predict college readiness. As part of this study, Iowa Testing completed a linking study of mapped individual content test scores to defined targets of readiness and ACT benchmarks. The results of this study provide supporting evidence that if a student scores in the top quartile on the Iowa Tests, the student is on track of being college ready. At present, Iowa's proficiency bar, being set at the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile, has resulted in about 80% of students being considered proficient in reading and in mathematics. Using a college-ready standard closer to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is a better indicator of college readiness; however it will dramatically lower the percentage of students designated proficient and, consequently, increase the percentage of schools in Iowa needing targeted technical assistance from IDE, AEAs, or other contracted provider selected by IDE or AEA system to support the work.

The framework described in Guiding Principle 2 defines classifications into which each school in the state will fall according to their proficiency, growth, participation, and other academic markers. Schools in Iowa will be classified as Distinguished (Exceptional for three or more consecutive years), Exceptional, High Performing, Commendable, Acceptable, Needs Improvement (Focus), and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years). The ESEA waiver requires states to describe reward, priority, and focus schools, and in Iowa's classifications, Distinguished and Exceptional are the same as reward, Needs Improvement and Unacceptable are the same as focus, and Priority and Unacceptable are the same as priority. Therefore, Iowa's request for waiver is more expansive than what is being asked of the states in the waiver process because:

- all schools in the state will be rated;
- school improvement efforts will be provided to all schools based on their identified needs, and
- State involvement will target Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for 3 or more consecutive years) as described in Principle 2.

Beginning in 2012, IDE will conduct an alignment study of the released NAEP items and the Iowa Core. The alignment study will assist in assessing the rigor of the Iowa Core standards as well as provide Iowa teachers with a test bank of aligned assessment items to use for classroom assessment and required high school end-of-course assessments as they begin implementing the Iowa Core. The intention of the IDE is to provide web-based access to the aligned test bank and professional development in their classroom use.

The state's blueprint for education includes a number of other activities. Those specifically addressing the implementation of the Iowa Core standards include the following:

- raise the bar for the Iowa Core to put Iowa's standards on par with the highest performing systems in the world,
- establish a standing state-level committee, made up primarily of teachers, to keep the standards up to date and make them a living document,
- use the AEAs as a unified, driving force, providing professional development to guide schools as they align curriculum to state standards and implement high expectations,
- design a rigorous "model" curriculum by July 2013 that can be used as a starting point for schools and teachers in strengthening their own core-subjects curriculum, and
- create high standards for critically important areas such as art, music, and world languages,

which help foster creativity and communication, among other key concepts vital to our children in this 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

### Subgroup Performance and Implications for Training on College and Career-Ready Standards

The achievement gaps apparent in Figures 1.B.3 (2010 reading Grade 4) and 1.B.4 (2010 mathematics Grade 4) and Iowa's recent history on the NAEP have resulted in State Board priorities to address achievement gaps. The current performance standard is set at the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile.

Figure 1.B.3: Percent of Students Proficient in Reading, 2010-2011.

Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	11
All Students	78.0	82.4	80.8	70.0	74.9	75.5	78.2
African American	52.6	57.4	57.1	40.8	47.4	47.9	51.9
American Indian	67.0	71.2	65.2	52.7	63.2	70.1	66.7
Asian	78.2	81.8	83.2	72.0	76.8	79.8	75.7
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	45.0	79.1	72.3	62.8	62.1	60.0	73.1
Hispanic	63.4	67.0	64.3	50.6	56.1	58.9	61.4
White	81.3	85.6	84.1	73.9	78.4	78.7	80.6
Two or more races	74.0	79.9	77.4	60.2	69.7	66.1	71.0
Male+	75.6	80.9	79.6	67.4	72.7	73.5	74.5
Female+	80.5	83.8	82.0	72.7	77.3	77.6	82.0
Disability*	42.2	48.1	44.3	28.4	30.7	29.3	30.4
Migrant**+	53.2	58.7	45.9	48.6	29.3	46.8	30.0
English Language Learner	55.0	58.4	50.4	31.0	30.3	36.7	30.4
Low Socioeconomic Status	67.1	71.9	69.5	55.3	60.8	61.4	63.8

Source: State Report Card (2010-2011)

Figure 1.B.4: Percent of Students Proficient in Mathematics, 2010-2011.

Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	11
All Students	78.6	82.2	80.4	75.2	80.0	77.7	77.8
African American	49.8	55.3	51.9	42.3	49.6	46.0	44.2
American Indian	60.9	65.4	65.2	48.4	64.7	61.6	64.3
Asian	82.4	82.3	84.2	81.8	85.1	82.0	77.1
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	50.0	69.8	66.0	55.8	63.3	60.0	69.2
Hispanic	63.7	68.2	64.5	57.4	65.6	61.5	57.3
White	82.3	85.4	84.0	79.1	83.2	81.2	80.8
Two or more races	69.5	79.3	72.2	64.7	72.2	70.2	71.1
Male+	79.5	82.8	81.8	75.4	79.8	78.3	79.4
Female+	77.7	81.6	78.9	75.0	80.2	77.0	76.1
Disability*	49.8	52.0	46.3	36.6	40.3	35.6	34.6
Migrant**+	58.5	60.0	51.1	62.5	49.4	60.7	32.7
English Language Learner	59.3	59.4	51.6	41.5	47.1	46.1	33.9
Low Socioeconomic Status	67.4	71.6	69.2	61.1	67.5	63.7	61.4

Source: State Report Card (2010-2011)



The State commitment to RtI reflects the priority of the State to provide more equitable outcomes for all students. Re-setting the proficiency bar to more accurately reflect college readiness will change the percentage of students proficient in each subgroup and could actually magnify the achievement differences already grossly inequitable in Iowa. How the State will ensure high standards and teacher readiness for two subgroups in particular, English Language Learners, and Students with Disabilities, will be presented in the next two sections.

**Additional Evidence of College and Career Readiness:** As part of the State’s responsibility to ensure all students graduate from high school with skill levels that represent college and career readiness, Iowa is committed to implementation of the following by 2014:

- a series of end-of-course assessments aligned with the Iowa Core,
- a required college entrance exam, and
- an optional career readiness assessment.

A series of end-of-course assessments aligned with the Iowa Core will be developed and validated. Teachers considered content expert will be nominated by peers to support test development. Tests will be designed to assess higher order thinking, will use selection and production responses, and performance levels representing college and career readiness will be established. The State then will have data on demographics of students enrolled in coursework leading to readiness to engage content relevant to globally competitive employment, and competence of students as they exit these courses. These data will be added to the performance index. Iowa will model the data to USDE in our determination framework, when the data are available statewide (with a goal of including data statewide for the 2014-2015 AYP determinations).

At present, Iowa ranks second in the nation on ACT performance (a test of college and career readiness). However, Iowa’s ACT performance is based largely on students planning on attending a 4-year college. The demographics of students in Iowa taking the ACT is not representative of the State. To truly understand the extent to which all children in Iowa are graduating ready for college- or-career. Iowa would like to mandate a college entrance exam for all students in Grade 11. We can project college readiness today using the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, and we will use this proxy in our Performance Score described in Principle 2. When we have data on a college entrance exam on all students, we will use this in our Performance Score. Iowa needs to secure legislative authority and \$2.5 million funding in order to make this important goal a reality.

Iowa leaders understand that postsecondary participation will lead to globally competitive employment, but also not all students will pursue postsecondary education. All students will take the college entrance exam and will be given the option of taking a career readiness assessment.

### **Ensuring Alignment of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards to the Common Core**

In 2007, the Iowa Department of Education contracted the Buros Center for Testing at the University of Nebraska to conduct a study of the linguistic demands and cognitive complexity of Iowa’s English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. Because this study was conducted prior to Iowa adopting the Common Core State Standards College- and Career-Ready Standards in 2010,

it is the intent of the IDE to use the analysis of Iowa’s college- and career-ready standards to inform the development of corresponding ELP standards. IDE believes that corresponding ELP and college- and career-ready standards will ensure that English Language Learners (ELL) have the opportunity to achieve the state’s college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students.

In October of 2011, IDE began partnering with CCSSO and a consortium of states to begin a process of developing college- and career-ready ELP standards and assessments that correspond to the Common Core State Standards. For the consortium, CCSSO has contracted with the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC) and the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC) to both develop common English language proficiency expectations that correspond to the Common Core State Standards and to conduct a systemic examination of current consortium state ELP/ELD standards to identify similarities and differences across the consortium states’ standards. The English language proficiency expectations and the results of the study will inform the development of common or coordinated ELP/ELD state standards aligned to the college- and career-ready standards of the CCSS.

In November 2011, IDE provided professional development on implementing the Iowa Core at the Iowa Culture and Language Conference. Classroom teachers and administrators conducted a cross walk of the ELP standards and the state’s college- and career-ready standards in the Iowa Core and learned how to use the ELP Standards in coordination with the ELA Standards of the Iowa Core.

Iowa’s AEAs have consultants dedicated to supporting students in their regions who have language learning needs. IDE coordinates meetings with these consultants and others in the state addressing English language acquisition for non-native speakers. IDE will use this already established network to support training of Content Standards, RtI, and evidence-based practices for teachers of students with language learner needs.

Although the current ESL assessment forms used by Iowa, English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) are only two years old, they were developed prior to the Common Core adoption. The State understands the need to develop an assessment more closely aligned to the Common Core. Currently, the State is working with the SCELA consortium to develop common English language proficiency standards aligned to the Common Core. The consortium is dedicated to procuring foundation or grant funding to develop a common ESL assessment based on these common standards and intends to have the work completed within three years. In the meantime, the state will conduct its own alignment study to determine the degree of alignment between the test items on the ELDA forms and the Iowa Core.

### **Aligning Teacher Evaluation and Principal Evaluation to Evidence of Implementation of College and Career-Ready Standards**

**Using Data to Target Professional Development:** Iowa’s Blueprint for Educational Reform, *One Unshakable Vision*, transforms Iowa’s educational system through great teachers and leaders, high expectations, and innovation. As Iowa studies its performance, IDE is committed to ensuring that all students in Iowa make at least one year’s growth in one year’s time or are



receiving targeted or intensive instruction. The data reported above, suggest systemic issues in universal instruction in which the State, AEAs, local schools, Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), and other stakeholders, must coordinate and collaborate so that improvement efforts in the state are evidence-based and teachers and administrators have skills needed to support students in meeting even more rigorous achievement requirements. IDE will use data to identify high performing schools and will develop an Instructional Clearinghouse of effective strategies as resources for districts and schools across the state.

From 2009-2010 to 2010-2011, about 65% of students in Iowa's assessment system made at least a year's growth in a year's time. The State expects 100% of students in the state to make at least a year's growth, and if not, targeted (and intensive, if needed) interventions that were evidence-based, should be implemented for those students. Intervention can be individual or small group, talented and gifted, a language-learning program or part of an Individualized Education Program.

The State does not currently have the infrastructure in place to determine if the 35% of students who did not make a year's growth, were receiving evidence-based targeted or intensive supports. However, the data system that will be built to support RtI will allow the SEA to examine

- growth for all students in the system, starting with elementary school reading,
- the extent to which whole class or small group supports are implemented when needed, and
- the effectiveness of general curriculum changes or targeted supports (including IEP services).

In order to support teachers, the State must work with AEA partners and others to ensure quality professional development to on using data to understand instructional needs, formative assessment, and effective instructional practices. In addition, data can be used at the school level to assess overall performance of a school building and to assess school culture and climate and readiness for change.

**Iowa Teaching Standards:** Iowa Code Chapter 284 titled *Teacher Performance, Compensation and Career Development* was first passed by the Iowa legislature during the 2001 legislative session to establish a student achievement and teacher quality program for the purpose of promoting high student achievement. The program at that time consisted of five major elements:

- a mentoring and induction program to provide support for beginning teachers,
- career paths with compensation levels that strengthen Iowa's ability to recruit and retain teachers,
- professional development designed to directly support best teaching practices,
- team-based variable pay that provided additional compensation when student performance improved, and
- evaluation of teachers against the Iowa teaching standards.

Iowa has a comprehensive approach to education that includes teacher preparation. Teacher preparation institutions are required to include Iowa Teaching Standards and Iowa Core Curriculum as part of the program approval process. Information sessions have occurred over the years to ensure the updated information is communicated to Institutes of Higher Education (IHE). Programs must provide evidence of planning, implementation, and candidate performance. The State is working to increase PK-12 student achievement and growth by improving teacher

effectiveness on a continuum of development from the preparation through practicing teacher levels.

As a primary effort of reform, Iowa is making legislative proposals to change the current teaching standards, which have been in place since 2001, to the nationally developed Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards in order to have a unified and consistent foundation for teacher effectiveness at all levels. In addition, the State is proposing policy changes to the existing teacher evaluation system that would make it more consistent and equitable as well as based on effective teaching research. After a field test, evaluator training and professional development is being aligned with these standards and expectations

Criteria and rubrics that clearly identify the performance levels for candidates and teachers from pre-service to the apprentice, career, mentor and master levels will accompany the standards. This will help to ensure teacher development for evaluative purposes and growth across the life cycle of the teacher from preparation through classroom practice. This attention to the life cycle of a teacher will allow for professional growth and change that will enhance the profession of each individual, as well as provide leadership roles that have not been afforded teachers in the past.

**Wallace Leadership Grant:** In 2001, Iowa was one of three states to be awarded the Wallace Leadership Grant. The leadership grant was implemented through the efforts of multiple partnerships including School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), the AEAs, the Urban Education Network (UEN), and IHEs. The major goal of the grant efforts was to develop, test and share useful approaches for improving the training of education leaders and the conditions that support their ability to significantly lift student achievement across entire states and districts, especially in high-needs schools by creating a cohesive leadership system. It was the vision of this grant to guarantee that quality leaders who will ensure that all children gain success as 21st century learners, earners and citizens will serve every child in every building in every district in every AEA in Iowa. The grant worked on the premise of a theory of action that included leadership standards, training, and conditions.

### **Partnerships with Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)**

To ensure that the new Standards and Assessment system meets the needs of both K–12 and higher education, IDE will work with IHEs during the development of the assessment system. By spring of 2012, an initial group will be convened and the work to put more rigor and consistency into Iowa’s pre-service preparation programs will begin. The State plans to develop modules on validated practices in universal screening and progress monitoring as well as instructional routines for promoting literacy to be taught statewide by spring of 2013. The AEA Professional Development Network will deliver the content to LEAs.

Significant consultation and collaborative planning between K–12 and higher education is essential for the new assessments to become part of their placement decisions. Faculty from a range of institutions need to weigh in on test design and standard setting; registrars must be consulted about score reporting, and provosts and other academic leaders will need to manage a process of revising current placement policies, among many other efforts. IDE has been working with higher education on a statewide longitudinal data system (SLOS) with the goal of sharing data prekindergarten-career.

Iowa has an existing network of higher education partners training teachers of students with disabilities. This network has committed to working with IDE to develop a common message pre-service through in-service, on standards, unpacking the standards, using data to inform instruction, evidence-based practices, and getting students with disabilities out of high school ready for life. IDE will convene an IHE work group to build syllabi, content modules, and commitment to prepare all teachers in Iowa to enter the work force ready to support all learners to leave Iowa's schools ready for college or career.

**Iowa's Senior Year Plus Program:** Last year 38,280 high school students enrolled in community college credit coursework. IDE refers to these students as "jointly enrolled." The *Senior Year Plus* Act has been in place since 2008. This legislation brought together all of the different ways that students could take college credits while still in high school. Joint enrollment of high school students accounts for a quarter of total community college credit enrollment and more than an eighth of total credit hours. The Senior Year Plus Program is intended to:

- lessen time for conferment of an Associate's Degree or higher,
- help students acclimate to the expectations of college-level work (particularly at-risk students),
- reduce remediation and increase postsecondary participation and degree attainment rates,
- provide advanced learning opportunities and make the senior year more productive, and
- reduce the financial burden of postsecondary education on Iowa's families.

Joint enrollment in Iowa community colleges has steadily risen to a record high of 38,283 unduplicated students in fiscal year 2010. Since fiscal year 2003, joint enrollment has increased 114.7 percent or about 10.0 percent per year. In Iowa, delivery of programming to high school students is a part of the community colleges' mission (Iowa Code 260C.1) and, consequently, all 15 community colleges are committed to offering college credit opportunities to these students.

Iowa's career and technical high school programs are required to have developed and implemented a minimum of 75% of their career and technical education programs to align with the Iowa program of study template by September 2012. These programs of study consistently connect secondary and postsecondary education. Specific requirements of the program of study include content standards and benchmarks; a list of critical competencies identified by an advisory committee/council; approved technical skill attainment assessments, and a plan for annual review and continuous improvement of the program of study. Work is currently in place to develop technical skill attainment and assessments for secondary schools and community colleges with the 16 Federal Career Clusters. Models are being developed with partnerships of high schools and community colleges to focus efforts on adopting statewide standards, including recommending course sequence featuring career ladders that are attractive to students. These models will include review and development of agreed upon academic and technical standards in cluster/pathways areas that are aligned with the national industry standards if available and appropriate for use statewide and the review and development of competencies, assessments, and proficiency levels that are aligned with the agreed-upon standards.

See Appendix 1-A for detailed timeline.

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## 1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and</p>
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<p>i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p>or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.</p>	<p>in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)</p>
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See Attachment 6.

## PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

### 2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

- 2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA’s plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

#### REDESIGNING IOWA’S SYSTEM OF RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

The new reality for our schools is that jobs which have traditionally sustained a quality, middle-class life style for our graduates have been outsourced or automated. Therefore, Iowa plans to implement a universal system of school improvement that will ensure ALL children and students in Iowa are growing academically, reaching proficiency, and graduating with the skills needed to become college- and career-ready so they can succeed in this new global, highly competitive environment.

Iowa’s Blueprint for Education, “One Unshakable Vision, World-Class Schools for Iowa,” released in October of 2011 calls for a new accountability system which aligns “the fractured systems of accreditation, compliance monitoring and school improvement at the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) to provide a system of unified supports and direction under a new system.” The work outlined in the Governor’s blueprint will be enhanced by the award of this flexibility request from the United States Department of Education (USDE). Both calls for action are focused on creating a statewide differentiated system of recognition, accountability, and support.

#### **Restructuring to Focus on Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

**Background:** While Iowa’s current system of support and accountability has its strengths and silos of excellence, processes and tools for school improvement planning are not aligned. The focus has been on monitoring and compliance, rather than on school improvement strengthened by monitoring and compliance. Recognition of school success is not a priority. Initiatives for support and accountability are not systemic.

**Accountability:** Iowa’s new accountability system will include multiple robust measures. These measures will transform the current system, promoting collaboration and systemic supports to LEAs and schools in raising achievement and ensuring all students are college- and career-ready. Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will be defined and trajectories set based on the distance between current school and subgroup performance and a Statewide Target. An Achievement Score that



includes growth as well as proficiency will be calculated for every school and combined with Other Academic Indicators (OAI)s for an overall school Performance Index. This Performance Index will be used as one measure to rank and classify schools into six different performance categories. Participation rates and graduation rates will be given high importance in this new accountability system. Also, a Closing Gap Score will be calculated as another measure to determine subgroup performance and to rank and classify schools. Significantly more students will be included in the accountability system as a result of reducing the N size of subgroups from 30 at the building level to 10 at the district level. These key elements and others within our waiver request create an accountability system capable of helping educators in our state monitor student progress and ensure all Iowa students are prepared to continue their education when they graduate from high school.

Our system of monitoring and compliance reporting will also be redesigned. Comprehensive site visits occur every five years to monitor accreditation standards and identified state and federal program components, as well as address elements of continuous improvement. However, the site visit process does not currently adjust to meet the unique needs of each district in order to specifically support continuous improvement. In addition, a variety of planning and monitoring systems are in place including the following:

- Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)
- Annual Progress Report (APR)
- Iowa Core Implementation Plan is the LEA plan for implementing the Iowa Core.
- District Developed Service Delivery Plan (DDSDP) is an explanation of how special education and related services are structured in the LEA.
- Iowa Support Team process which supports Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA) and Districts in Need of Assistance (DINA) under the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Although we are developing a Consolidated Plan (C-Plan) for school reporting, the underlying processes and technical assistance to support the system remain confusing and disjointed:

- The site visit accreditation process for monitoring and school improvement is structured around an examination of the **Seven** Characteristics of Effective and Improving Schools and Districts (Seven Characteristics);
- The CSIP school improvement process currently utilized by all districts is framed around **four** Constant Conversation Questions;
- The Iowa Core planning process is founded on **six** outcomes, and
- Iowa Support Team process for supporting SINA and DINA focuses on **three** domains.

**Aligning the System:** Our redesigned system will **(1)** be founded on one set of principles, one tool, and one process for continuous improvement, **(2)** embed Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports to support all students, **(3)** align with universal systems of support and rewards for all schools, and **(4)** align with differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools.

1. **One set of Principles, One Tool, One Process:** Through a study of research, the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Accreditation and Improvement Services identified Seven Characteristics (See Appendix 2-A): mission, vision, goals; leadership; collaborative relationships; learning environments; curriculum and instruction; professional learning, and

monitoring accountability. The Seven Characteristics will align the principles that guide school improvement for our state with the tool used for reporting and the process for support of schools across the state.

- **One set of principles, The Seven Characteristics for Effective and Improving Schools and Districts:** These principles are being used to unify, simplify, and coordinate currently existing initiatives with a set of principles aligned with the school improvement research. For example, these characteristics have been used to organize the current site visit process as well as the comprehensive site visit report. Efforts continue to align other work with and for schools with these characteristics.

A cross walk between the Seven Characteristics and the Turnaround Principles conducted by the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) demonstrates a strong correlation between the two (See Appendix 2-B). The Seven Characteristics have also been cross walked with the Six Outcomes of the Iowa Core and the Consolidated Plan for state reporting. Other components with which the characteristics will be cross walked in the future include the Iowa Core planning process.

The Seven Characteristics will now become the foundation for the district Self Study, analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation process outlined in this flexibility request. All districts with schools classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three consecutive years) schools will be assigned an Iowa Support Team, which will use the data from the Self Study to outline and monitor an improvement plan based on these characteristics to ensure all students graduate college- and career-ready . However, the Iowa Support Team will not be assigned to work with school classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, or Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three consecutive years) solely due to participation.

- **One Tool, Consolidated Plan (C-Plan):** Efforts are underway to streamline the collection process of mandatory reports, data, planning, and progress for districts and schools. This process is titled the Consolidated Plan, or C-Plan. The goal is that elements of the C-Plan, which is organized around the Seven Characteristics, will be utilized by schools and districts as a “living” document used to guide continuous improvement. Implementation of the C-Plan will begin in the summer of 2012. Additional information about the C-Plan can be found on the Department’s website at <http://tiny.cc/CPlan>.
- **One Process for Continuous Improvement Planning:** Beginning in 2012-13 all Title I Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority schools, and in 2013-14 all Title I schools, will be required to annually complete a Continuous Improvement Plan using the C-Plan tool and a Self Study of their Continuous Improvement Plan. Revisions in Iowa Administrative Code will be sought to require non Title I schools and districts, regardless of classification, to annually complete the Continuous Improvement Plan part of the C-Plan and Self Study as well.  
Schools and districts will be provided guidance and training in a process to design a Continuous Improvement Plan and the use of the new C-Plan. Work will begin in the spring of 2012 to develop this guidance on the continuous planning process, revise the current improvement plan for use by all schools and districts, and develop a Self Study

instrument.

Since school improvement is a systems issue, districts approve individual school improvement plans, and the State approves district level plans. However, for Title I Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority schools the State will also approve school level plans. The plans of schools in their third years as Needs Improvement (Focus) or Priority and all schools classified Unacceptable will be approved by the State Review Panel.

- **Rewards:** Iowa has three areas of recognition for its Exceptional Schools (Reward) and Distinguished Schools (Exceptional for three or more consecutive years): (1) state recognition, (2) increased flexibility, and (3) opportunities for leadership. State recognition is described in 2.C.

2. **Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports for All Students:** Response to Intervention (academic support) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (behavior supports) are composed of three levels and offer schools a systemic way to look at the intensity of intervention needs. Such systems include (a) universal instruction to meet the needs of all students, (b) selective or targeted interventions for students who continue to struggle even after high quality universal instruction is provided, and (c) individual or intense interventions for students not responding to the first two levels. The goal of such systems is to match the intensity of student need with the intensity of interventions (Farmer, Farmer, Estell, and Hutchins, 2007). In addition, these supports for student learning will be embedded into the continuing improvement process for all schools.
3. **Universal Systems of Support of All Schools:** Universal Systems of Supports strategies and supports have been identified that provide the foundation of success for each and every Iowa student to become college- and career-ready. Each strategy is described in detail in 2.D.
4. **Differentiated Support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three consecutive years) Schools:** As school improvement is a systems issue, the IDE will focus monitoring and support at the district level. Districts with schools classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, or Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) and districts with schools having either classification will receive support from the Iowa Support Team in designing their continuous improvement plan. These supports are outlined in 2.D and 2.E.

The Iowa Support Team will lead districts through the five phases of the **System for Improving Student Success (SISS)** process. Phase I is an intense needs assessment for schools to focus on the collection and analysis of school data to identify strengths and areas of concern. Phase II is a completion of a gap analysis based on the comparison of the current reality with the desired state. In the planning phase (Phase III) schools develop a three-year action plan to address the prioritized areas of concern in order to increase student achievement through a multi-tiered system of support (RtI). The implementation and evaluation phases (Phase IV and V) build the capacity of teachers and leaders in the school to increase the achievement of all students. This process is explained further under the Priority Schools section of this waiver (2.D.iii).

### Paradigm Shift

This redesigning of Iowa’s accountability system will necessitate paradigm shifts for educators, parents, students, and community members across the state. The major paradigm shifts include:

- Eliminating the belief that being “good” is “good enough” by developing a new, rigorous and comprehensive state accountability system that improves educational outcomes for all students, closes achievement gaps, increases equity, and improves the quality of instruction;
- Aligning a disjointed system of accreditation, compliance monitoring, and school improvement to provide a new system of unified supports and direction;
- Moving from a school improvement/accreditation process of “one size fits all” to a tiered system of school support for continuous improvement based on the new accountability system classifications (Distinguished to Priority). This tiered system allows IDE and other supports (AEA, LEA) to focus on the lowest performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps;
- Rating all schools on a scale from Distinguished to Unacceptable (See Figure 2.A.1):
- Providing incentives and supports for all schools;
- Providing a multi-tiered system of support, RtI, for students in which intensity of instruction and supports match student need, and
- Building capacity of all LEAs to provide needed support to their low performing school, thus holding LEAs accountable for the achievement of each and every student.

Figure 2.A.1: School Classifications

Federal Classification	Iowa’s Schools Classification
Reward	Distinguished (Exceptional for three or more consecutive years)
Reward	Exceptional
None	High Performing
None	Commendable
None	Acceptable
Focus	Needs Improvement
Focus	Unacceptable (Focus for three or more consecutive years)
Priority	Priority
Priority	Unacceptable (Priority for three or more consecutive years)

### Theory of Action

These changes for education in Iowa will replace our fractured system with a system focused on differentiated recognition, accountability, and support.

- **Differentiated Recognition:** Iowa’s emerging unified system of rewards, supports, and interventions provides not only recognition for schools successful at raising student achievement and eliminating gaps, but also opportunities to replicate successes in other schools. (See Section 2.C.iii).

- **Differentiated Accountability:** Iowa’s new accountability system will include multiple robust measures. These measures will transform the current system, promoting collaboration and systemic supports to LEAs and schools in raising achievement, and ensuring all students are college- and career-ready.
- **Differentiated Support:** Iowa’s new system establishes universal systems and supports for all schools and districts, with a focus on providing specialized assistance to schools classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, or Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) and districts with schools having these classifications. Since student achievement is a systems issue, our focus is on holding districts accountable for school performance and providing them with support to positively influence achievement in their schools.
- **Expectation:** Therefore, if Iowa (1) operates under on one set of principles, one tool, and one process for continuous improvement, (2) embeds Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports for all students, (3) aligns universal systems of support of and rewards for all schools, and (4) aligns differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools, then Iowa will meet our objective of improving the quality of all schools so that all Iowa students are ready for college and career.

### Iowa Department of Education Role

IDE’s role in redesigning the system will be to provide leadership to (1) clearly define the roles of each agency (as a state, Area Education Agency, district, and individual school), (2) build the capacity to support the system; and (3) continuously monitor and adjust our plans. For more detail see Section 2.G.

### Timeline

Planning for the implementation of our differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will begin in the spring of 2012 with implementation beginning in 2012-13. See Figure 2.A.2 for an abbreviated timeline and Appendix 2-C for a detailed timeline.

Figure 2.A.2: Abbreviated Timeline

2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement SEA, AEA, LEA communication system for all elements of the approved ESEA Flexibility Request</li> <li>• Design system to evaluate fidelity of implementation of ESEA Flexibility Request and impact on student achievement</li> <li>• Begin process to seek needed changes to Iowa Administrative Code</li> <li>• Identify RtI assessment tools</li> <li>• Build statewide data system for RtI</li> <li>• Design and program tools for data analysis and reporting of new accountability model</li> </ul>
2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement system to evaluate fidelity of implementation of ESEA Flexibility Request and impact on student achievement</li> <li>• Implement C-Plan for all districts and Continuous Improvement Planning Tools component for Title I schools</li> <li>• Revise District/School Continuous Improvement Plan for universal use</li> <li>• Develop and implement District/School Self Study of Continuous Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Refine Iowa Support Team school improvement planning process for use by all districts and schools</li> <li>• Finalize collaborative design of Clearinghouse</li> <li>• Pilot tiered system of accreditation</li> <li>• Detail structure of school recognition (Distinguished and Exceptional Schools)</li> <li>• Detail structure of interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority Schools</li> <li>• Design system to measure the fidelity of implementation &amp; impact of support/interventions for Needs Improvement/Priority schools and process to make adjustments as needed</li> <li>• Create consensus, infrastructure, PD model for RtI</li> <li>• Identify cohorts for LEA implementation of RtI</li> <li>• Develop research and evaluation plan for RtI</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority begin implementation of Turnaround Principles (2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Define and design elements of a value added model</li> <li>• Implement new accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze “Safe &amp; Supportive Schools” suspensions and expulsions data to define measures to include in the accountability model</li> </ul>
2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement tiered system of accreditation statewide</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority in continue implementation of Turnaround Principles (add 2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Define college and career readiness data elements and assessments and implement into Iowa’s accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze “Safe &amp; Supportive Schools” student engagement, parent satisfaction and staff working conditions data to define measures to include in the accountability model</li> </ul>
2014-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority fully implement Turnaround Principles (add final 2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Implement additional assessments such as the Smarter Balanced Assessments, Dynamic Learning Maps and end of course exams</li> <li>• Study the use of at risk measures to build a school challenge index to possibly include in the accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze data to define Response to Intervention (RtI) measures to possibly include in the accountability model</li> </ul>

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

<b>Option A</b> <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> The SEA includes student achievement only	<b>Option B</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on
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on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	<p>assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and</li> <li>• include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.</li> </ul>
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Iowa is only including student achievement on reading and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.

## 2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

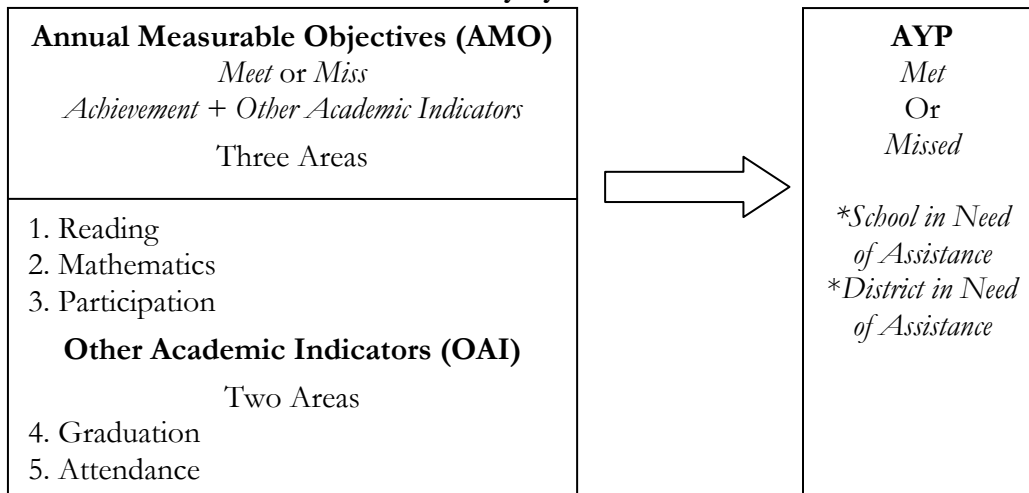
<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> <li>2) Provide an educationally sound</li> </ol>
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<p>AMOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> </ul>	<p>rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>3) Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)</p>
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### Iowa's Current Accountability System

Iowa's current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system (Figure 2.B.1) requires districts, schools, and subgroups to meet established Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) according to the approved accountability workbook (<http://tinyurl.com/AccWkBk>). In the current system, agencies are required to meet a 95% participation rate on the statewide assessments in mathematics and reading, have separate AMOs for mathematics and reading that are established at the state level, and include two Other Academic Indicators (OAI) - graduation rates for high schools and attendance rates for all other schools. Iowa also incorporates an approved growth model into its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) system which allows non-proficient students meeting criteria to be counted towards proficiency in their schools, districts, and subgroups.

**Figure 2.B.1: Iowa's Current Accountability System**



This current system of accountability does not allow for differentiation (you either make or miss

AYP in relation to the 5 indicators), excludes large numbers of students and schools from the system (n=30 at the school level for including subgroup in achievement or attendance rates; n=40 for including subgroups in test participation rates), does not allow for differences among schools (progress targets and trajectories are set at the state level and are the same for every school).

### Iowa's Proposed Accountability System

The primary reason that Iowa desires to modify its current accountability system is to create a differentiated system that raises the bar for all schools and districts, includes more students in the accountability system, provides a more individualized approach to systemic improvement of teaching and learning, and makes significant improvements to the current system. Key improvements will include:

- an expectation of growth for all students - not just non-proficient students as currently exists,
- indicators of college readiness (or secondary and post-secondary success) as an OAI incorporated into the Performance Index at all grade levels,
- a reduction of the minimum n size for subgroups from 30 at the school level to 10 at the district level, enabling the inclusion of significantly more subgroups of students at the school and district level, and
- a statewide achievement target which, when combined with a new minimum n size, enables even more groups of students to count in the accountability system. This also creates a situation that requires schools that are underperforming to improve at a greater rate than schools that are already meeting achievement targets.

A comparison of the variables in Iowa's current system of accountability and Iowa's proposed system of accountability has been provided as [Appendix 2-D](#).

### Overview

Iowa's new accountability system will include multiple robust measures. These measures will create a "score card" for schools and districts and transform the current system, promoting collaboration and systemic supports to LEAs and schools in raising achievement and ensuring all students are college- and career-ready. The first measure, an **Achievement Score**, is a combination of reading and mathematics achievement accounting for growth as well as proficiency. The Achievement Score has two functions. First, it is utilized as an overall achievement score for schools as 80% of an overall Performance Index, which is then used to classify the lowest performing schools. Secondly, it is utilized as a subgroup achievement score for each school to classify schools with subgroup achievement gaps. The achievement score will be calculated for every school and will include **all** (including students with disabilities and English language learners) district full academic year students who take the regular assessment and the assessment based on alternate academic standards (one percent). Growth and proficiency will be given equal weight in the score. This achievement score is considered in relation to a statewide achievement target that all schools will strive to reach over the next ten years. Trajectories, providing a road-map for setting goals and monitoring progress, will be drawn for all schools and

all eligible subgroups based upon the distance between the current performance of the school/subgroup and the statewide target. Annual measurable objectives (AMOs) based on these trajectories will be defined for schools and the annual growth needed in order to reach the statewide achievement target in ten years. Even though the accountability system focuses primarily on the school level, achievement scores and trajectories can be calculated at any level (school, district, region, as well as the state) enabling a more comprehensive look at achievement and a more systemic approach to improvement.

**Other Academic Indicators** (OAI) include graduation rates for high schools, attendance rates, college readiness rates, and third grade reading proficiency and will be combined with the achievement score to generate an overall school **Performance Index**. The Performance Index will be scaled from 0 to 100 and be used as one measure to classify schools into categories of performance. The achievement score will account for 80 points of the performance index and OAI will account for 20 points.

A **Closing Gap Score** will be calculated as a measure of subgroup (including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, low socioeconomic status, African American, Asian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, Native American, White, and two or more races) performance in reading and mathematics, including proficiency and growth and will be also be used to rank and categorize schools. Trajectories will be drawn and Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will be calculated for each subgroup in a school based upon the distance between their current performance and reaching the statewide achievement score target of 85 in ten years. The closing gap score will be measured as the percentage of eligible subgroups in a school that have met their AMO.

**Participation Rates and Graduation Rates** will serve as gatekeepers for the accountability system, which means that if a school falls below a 95% participation rate in reading and mathematics combined or below a 60% graduation rate for all students, it will automatically be classified as a Priority School. Schools that have a subgroup participation rate below 95% or graduation rate below 60% for at least one subgroup will be automatically classified as a Focus School. The subgroup graduation rates have an n size of 10 and subgroup participation rates have an n size of 20.

Stakeholder feedback change:  
Participation Rate and Graduation  
Rate calculations being utilized as  
“gatekeeper” measures.

These measures will be combined as displayed in Figure 2.B.2 to create a tiered performance classification system for schools in Iowa.

Figure 2.B.2: Iowa's Accountability System Performance Categories

Iowa's Performance Category	Federal Category	Performance Index	Participation Rate	Graduation Rate	Closing Gap Score
Distinguished	Reward	Placed in the Exceptional category for three consecutive years			
Exceptional	Reward	79 or more	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	100
High Performing	N/A	69 to 78	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	100
Commendable	N/A	69 or more	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	1 to 99
Acceptable	N/A	57 to 68	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	1 to 100
Needs Improvement (Focus)	Focus	57 or more	>=95% for all students; <95% for one or more subgroup—automatic placement in Needs Improvement	>=60% for all students; <60% for one or more subgroup—automatic placement in Needs Improvement	0
Priority	Priority	56 or less All SIG schools	<95% for all students—automatic placement in Priority	<60% for all students—automatic placement in Priority	0 to 100
Unacceptable	Priority	Placed in the Priority category for any reason for three consecutive years			

Stakeholder feedback change: It is best to utilize multiple years of data to identify schools at the top (Distinguished) or bottom (Unacceptable) of the spectrum.

**Data collection:** For the initial implementation of the proposed accountability system, data will be utilized from existing data collections that are in place. This will not create any additional burdens for districts and schools. The transition plan to include additional future OAI's will include plans for implementing new data collections and will address any capacity issues for districts and schools to ensure that this information is able to be easily submitted.

## Methodology

Iowa will use 2008-2009/2009-2010/2010-2011 data as baseline to pilot the new accountability system and transition to a value-added model with legislative appropriation. Several measures will be utilized in this new system of accountability:

1. Achievement Score
2. Other Academic Indicators Score
  - a. College Readiness Rates
  - b. Graduation Rates
  - c. Attendance Rates
  - d. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency Rates
3. Performance Index (a combination of the achievement score and the score for other academic indicators)
4. Closing Gap Score
5. Gatekeeper Measures:
  - a. Participation Rates
  - b. Graduation Rates

Trajectories will be drawn and Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will be calculated for each school and subgroup based upon the distance between their current performance and the statewide Achievement Score target of 85. Schools and subgroups will be monitored according to whether or not their annual growth indicates enough improvement each year to reach the statewide target of an Achievement Score of 85 within a ten year period (in other words, whether or not they are “on trajectory” for reaching the target score in ten years). Adequate annual progress for the subgroups is defined as the amount of improvement necessary each year to maintain their trajectory for reaching the statewide target of an Achievement Score of 85 within a ten year period.

As we develop a new accountability system, using historical data is our best way of modeling out expected results at any different cut score levels set. The impact of different achievement targets using historical data based on achievement targets of 85, 80, and 75 were modeled. While there were slight differences in numbers of schools in the various categories using different targets, there were not dramatic shifts. Using 85 as a target results in the inclusion of schools of different enrollment categories in all performance levels. This application for a waiver is not a retreat from the concept of accountability. Our set goal is a high, but achievable, target for our schools to achieve. The Iowa Department of Education believes a target of 85 is appropriate given our goal of high expectations and in reviewing historical data results.

Iowa’s proposed accountability model will be implemented beginning with the 2012-13 school year. Additional details outlining this timeline are included in [Appendix 2-E](#).



## 1) The Achievement Score:

The first measure is the Achievement Score (Figure 2.B.3). The score indicates how close the school is to the statewide achievement target – a score that all schools and subgroups will work towards attaining within ten years. The Achievement Score combines performance on the reading and mathematics assessments. The grid for figuring a school's Achievement Score considers both proficiency and growth.

**Figure 2.B.3: Achievement Score Grid**

Proficiency	Yes	High/Low 0.5	High/High 1
	No	Low/Low 0	Low/High 0.5
		No	Yes
		Growth	

**Proficiency:** On the vertical axis is proficiency – whether or not students are currently proficient on the state reading or mathematics assessments using the current criteria of proficiency for 2010-11 and prior. In 2011-12, we will transition to the new Iowa Assessments and proficiency will be defined for each grade and subject. Iowa will engage in a standard setting process during the summer of 2012 to identify and define academic achievement standards (proficiency cut scores) for reading and mathematics.

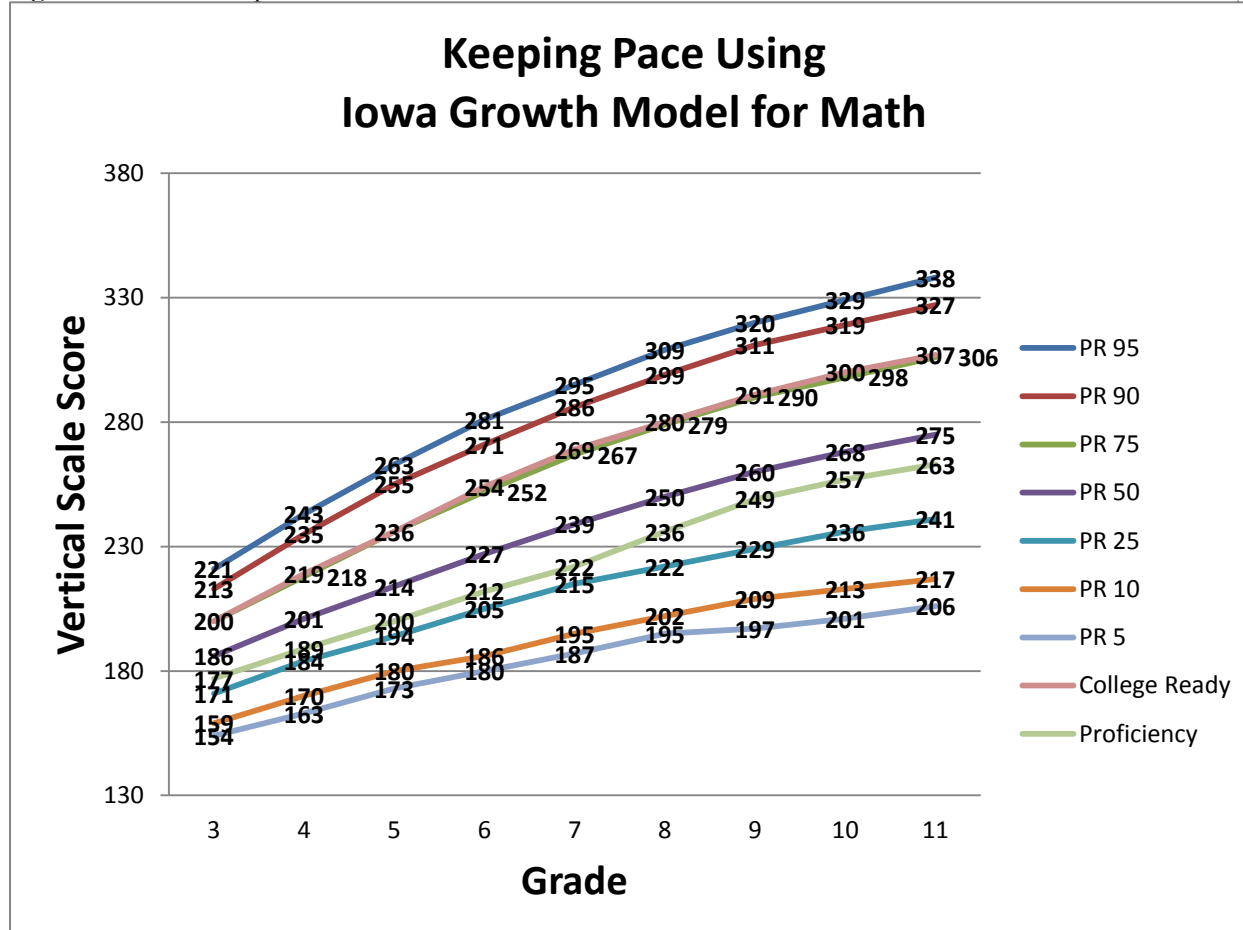
**Growth:** The horizontal axis represents growth. Growth is being defined differently for students at different levels of proficiency on the state assessments: students who are not yet proficient, students who are currently demonstrating proficiency, and students who are considered advanced.

Figure 2.B.4 shows model projections reflecting normal growth patterns of students at different achievement levels, according to the vertical scale developed for the statewide assessment. For the current proposal, non-proficient students who make growth will need to not only increase the scale scores to maintain (one year's) growth, but will also need to gain additional scale scores (one standard error) to make progress toward proficiency. Proficient students will need to increase their scale scores required to maintain growth (grow one year) to be counted as achieving growth. Because of the volatility of growth for advanced students, students in the advanced category will need to increase scale scores within a 1 SEM error band of the scale scores required to maintain growth (grow one year). This growth model ensures that all students are learning at an

appropriate pace, with non-proficient students learning the fastest in order to catch up with their proficient peers.

Stakeholder feedback change: The growth calculation was changed to measure growth differently for the various proficiency levels.

Figure 2.B.4: Example of Iowa's Growth Model for Math



**Calculating the Achievement Score:** All students will fall into one of the four quadrants of the Achievement Score grid. The bottom left quadrant, in red, represents students who are not proficient and not growing on the state assessment (reading or mathematics). We have called this cell “Low/Low.” Diagonal to it in the upper right quadrant (in green) is the High/High cell for students who are both proficient and demonstrating growth. The other two cells (in yellow) are for students who are currently not proficient but are growing (lower right) or students who are currently proficient but not demonstrating growth (upper left).

To calculate the Achievement Score for any school, all students in grades 4-8 and 11 are placed in

the grid based on their performance (using multiple years of data for the growth component) in each reading and mathematics. A school receives 1 point for each student demonstrating both growth and proficiency (in the green High/High quadrant) in an assessment, ½ point for each student demonstrating growth or proficiency (in the yellow High/Low or Low/High quadrants), and no points for each student not growing and not proficient (in the red Low/Low quadrant).

For example, a school's students could be placed on the Achievement Score grid (Figure 2.B.5) as follows:

- 26 students/assessments in High/High =  $26 * 1 = 26$
- 18 students/assessments in High/Low =  $18 * 0.5 = 9$
- 25 students/assessments in Low/High =  $25 * 0.5 = 12.5$
- 19 students/assessments in Low/Low =  $19 * 0 = 0$
- Sum of calculated values from quadrants = 47.5
- Divide sum to calculate values from quadrants (47.5) by total number of students/assessments in grid (88) = Achievement Score = 54

Figure 2.B.5: Example of how to include reading and mathematics assessments in the Achievement Score grid

Proficiency	Yes	<b>High/Low (0.5)</b> 10 students reading 8 students mathematics 18 total students/assessments	<b>High/High (1)</b> 12 students reading 14 students mathematics 26 total students/assessments
	No	<b>Low/Low (0)</b> 9 students reading 10 student mathematics 19 total students/assessments	<b>Low/High (0.5)</b> 13 students reading 12 students mathematics 25 total students/assessments
		No	Yes
		Growth	

Or simply, you take the percentage of students in each quadrant and assign points for each percentage of students (0 points, 0.5 points, 1 point) and add them together to get the Achievement Score.

In summary, the process for calculating the Achievement Score is:

1. Determine number of students/assessments in each quadrant
2. Multiply the number of students/assessments in each quadrant times the weighting for that quadrant (0 points, 0.5 point, 1 point)
3. Sum the calculated values from each quadrant

#### 4. Divide the calculated value by the total number of students/assessments

To calculate growth and proficiency for the Achievement Score, current year achievement results will be matched with the previous year's achievement results by a unique state student identifier (state ID number). Students with results in both the current and previous year (and who advance a grade level between the years) will be included in the Achievement Score. Since third graders do not have achievement results for the previous year, they will not be included in the Achievement Score. However, third grade students will be included in participation rates and third grade reading proficiency rates will be included in the model as an OAI. The majority of 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Iowa are assessed as 10<sup>th</sup> graders (over 85%). Eleventh grade assessment results will be included in the Achievement Score. Eleventh grade students who do not take an assessment in 10<sup>th</sup> grade will not have a growth measure and be placed in either the high/high quadrant (weight of 1) or low/low quadrant (weight of 0).

A trajectory for each school (district, subgroup, etc.) can be drawn indicating the increase needed each year for achieving the target score in ten years based on their current Achievement Score. The target score of 85 was determined using the current status of schools in the state and determining what would be both ambitious and realistic in terms of improvement.

The Achievement Score grid allows individual students to become visible within quadrants, providing educators a roadmap for aligning supports to eliminate gaps between subgroups and increase student achievement for all students. LEAs and schools will use Achievement Scores to examine gaps within quadrants and subgroups and monitor their progress towards the statewide achievement target of 85.

This matrix and Achievement Score can be used to look at our current status (and monitor progress) at all levels – grade, building, district, Area Education Agency, or the entire state. It can also be calculated for specific subgroups. All levels will be able to calculate their Achievement Score, generate a trajectory for reaching the target score 85 in ten years, set goals and monitor progress to ensure success.

The Achievement Score is later multiplied by .8 and weighted at 80 points of an overall Performance Index (100 points total).

**Weightings for the Achievement Score Grid:** This model weights proficiency and growth equally (each counts as 0.5 of a point on the Achievement Score grid). While we know there are advocates on each side that would say one variable (proficiency or growth) is more important than the other, it is our belief that either one measure without the other provides a distorted picture of achievement. Having both measures provides a more complete assessment of what is happening in a school and provides a more valid foundation for making judgments about school quality. For that reason, we chose to weight them equally.

**Placement of Alternate Assessments (1%) in the Achievement Score Grid:** Currently, Iowa does not have a measure of growth for students taking the alternate assessment. Therefore, these students will not count towards growth and be placed in either the high/high quadrant (weight of 1) or low/low quadrant (weight of 0). Iowa is currently exploring adding growth to our alternate assessment so we can use growth in the Achievement Score for these students.

**Combining Reading and Mathematics for the Achievement Score:** Reading and mathematics will be combined to calculate the achievement score for each school. By taking the number of students who are in each quadrant for reading and mathematics individually, and summing across quadrants, then dividing by the total number of students across reading and mathematics, it is possible to calculate an Achievement Score using both reading and mathematics assessments. If all students take both assessments, the denominator for the calculation will be twice the number of students tested.

**Goals Related to the Achievement Score:** There are three important goals related to the Achievement Score and Statewide target:

- 100% of the students in the High/High quadrant (long term goal),
- 0% of the students in the Low/Low quadrant (shorter term goal), and
- reach an overall Achievement Score of 85 or higher (ten year goal).

**Supporting Information for Iowa's Statewide Target of 85:** The statewide target of 85 was established after reviewing the data to determine where schools are currently performing. Based on the data, 85 appeared to be an ambitious, yet achievable, target. We ran simulations based on Achievement Scores of 80, 75, and 70 and realized that a statewide target below 85 would enable far too many schools to have a large percentage of their students not proficient and not growing. The literature is very clear, schools that beat the odds and significantly improve the learning of their most difficult to reach students have set high expectations and demonstrated a strong belief that all students can achieve at high levels. As a state, we are committed to setting the bar high, increasing the urgency for meeting the needs of more of our students, and increasing our responsibility for the learning of all of our students. Both excellence and equity in the education of our young people must be a standard from which we will not waver. However, setting our sights too high in this waiver request would only leave schools and districts behind and create increased frustration. For that reason, it was important to us to establish a statewide target with clear evidence that it is also achievable.

The statewide data, based on more than 1,300 schools with grades 3 to 8 and 11 during the 2010-2011 school year, indicated:

- 25 schools (1.9%) have an Achievement Score of 85 or higher,
- 85 schools (6.5%) have an Achievement Score of 80 or higher,
- 271 schools (20.8%) have an Achievement Score of 75 or higher, and
- 587 schools (45.1%) have an Achievement Score of 70 or higher.

Another factor indicating the target is likely achievable by all schools is the fact that reaching the target is a ten year goal. For 94% of Iowa schools, they only have to increase 3 points per year for the next 10 years. This timeframe should provide time for schools/districts to define and take action to improve learning and to modify those actions as needed to meet their trajectory for the ten year target.

**Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs):** AMOs will be calculated for each school, district, and eligible subgroups within a district. Schools will be measured on the annual amount that the

trajectory moves. Adequate annual progress for the subgroups is defined as the amount of improvement necessary to meet their trajectories over time for reaching the statewide target of an Achievement Score of 85 within a ten-year period.

The formula for calculating the AMO:

$$\text{AMO} = (85 - \text{baseline Achievement Score}) \div 10$$

(85 is the statewide target and 10 indicates the ten year period to reach the goal)

For example, this is the achievement grid for a current subgroup (low socioeconomic status) in an Iowa school in a district of approximately 200 students (Figure 2.B.6).

Figure 2.B.6: Example from a subgroup (Low Socioeconomic status students) in an Iowa School

Proficiency	Yes	<b>High/Low</b> <b>65</b> <b>assessments</b>	<b>High/High</b> <b>80</b> <b>assessments</b>
	No	<b>Low/Low</b> <b>35</b> <b>assessments</b>	<b>Low/High</b> <b>55</b> <b>assessments</b>
		No	Yes
		Growth	

The achievement score for this low socioeconomic subgroup in the school is:

$$((80*1) + (65*0.5) + (55*0.5) + (35*0))/235 = 60$$

This subgroup will need to increase their achievement score by 25 points over the next 10 years to reach the statewide target of 85.  $(85 - 60 = 25)$

This subgroup in the school will need to increase their achievement score by at least 2.5 points per year  $(25 \div 10 = 2.5)$  to reach the statewide target of 85 in 10 years.

## 2) The Other Academic Indicators (OAI) Score:

The accountability system will include OAI in studying the current status of schools and districts in our state. The OAIs are criterion referenced variables that will be utilized in the calculation of the Performance Index. OAIs will include graduation rates, attendance rates, and college ready rates. All OAIs will be scaled, assigned points, and collectively weighted as 20 points of the Performance Index. Schools will be measured on the following indicators:



**OAI School Categories:** Three categories of schools were formulated to apply points for OAI's:

- High schools: serve primarily grades 9-12
- Middle/Junior High schools: serve primarily grades 6-8 (includes some grades 7-8 schools)
- Elementary schools: serve primarily grades K-5 (includes some grades K-6 schools)

The specific OAIs that will apply to each type of school are listed below:

- High Schools
  - Graduation rates (10 points)
  - College ready rates (5 points)
  - Attendance rates (5 points)
- Middle/Junior High Schools
  - College ready rates (10 points)
  - Attendance rates (10 points)
- Elementary Schools
  - Attendance rates (10 points)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency rates (10 points)

Iowa's model is built to allow additional OAIs to be added as data are defined and collected. Our goal is to ensure we are measuring schools on more than simply an assessment score.

#### **Calculations for Other Academic Indicators:**

**College Ready Rates:** High schools will include a measurement of college readiness using the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Iowa Assessment National Scale Scores (NSS) that translates to college readiness scores on the ACT as found in the Iowa Testing Programs study, *Establishing Validity Evidence to Assess College Readiness through a Vertical Scale* (Furgol, et. al. 2011). Middle/junior high schools will include the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Iowa Assessment NSSs that translate to college readiness scores.

Based on data from Iowa Testing Programs:

- Spring NSS for college readiness(Iowa Assessment)
  - Grade 11
    - 306 – Reading
    - 306 – Mathematics
  - Grade 8
    - 279—Reading
    - 279—Mathematics
  - Grade 7
    - 266—Reading
    - 267—Mathematics
  - Grade 6
    - 253—Reading

■ 252—Mathematics

Reading and mathematics college readiness will be combined by adding to total number of students at or above the college ready cut point in reading and mathematics and dividing that number by the sum of students assessed in each reading and mathematics. This calculation will include all students (including student with disabilities and ELLs) that took the Iowa Assessments who are full academic year in the district. High schools and middle/junior high schools will be assigned points for college readiness based on the following criteria (Figure 2.B.7).

Stakeholder feedback change:  
The definition of full academic year was changed from school to district.

Figure 2.B.7: Criteria for College Readiness Points

Percentage of Students Attaining the Readiness Score	High School Points	Middle/Junior High School Points
86% - 100%	5 points	10 points
72% - 85%	4 points	8 points
58% - 71%	3 points	6 points
44% - 57%	2 points	4 points
30% - 43%	1 points	2 points
29% and below	0 points	0 points

**Graduation Rates:** One OAI for high schools will be graduation rates. Iowa will use both four-year and five-year cohort graduation rates in its accountability system. The four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated for the class of 2011 by dividing the number of students in the cohort (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less (by the 2010-2011 school year) by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled in the fall of 2006 minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in.

The five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated using a similar methodology as the four-year cohort rate. This rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in the cohort (denominator) who graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years or less (by the 2009-2010 school year) by the number of first-time 9th graders enrolled in the fall of 2005 minus the number of students who transferred out plus the total number of students who transferred in. The five-year cohort rate will maintain the same denominator as the previous year's four-year cohort rate, simply adding students who graduate in the fifth year to the numerator.

Iowa's accountability system will use the highest of each high school's four-year and five-year cohort rates. Schools will be assigned points for graduation rates based on the following criteria (Figure 2.B.8). Iowa's State Board of Education has identified a graduation rate of 95% as an end goal. Therefore, a school will need to reach the 95% goal in order to receive maximum points.

Figure 2.B.8: Criteria for Graduation Rates

Graduation Rate*	Points
95% - 100%	10 points
90% - 94%	8 points
85% - 89%	6 points
80% - 84%	4 points
75% - 79%	2 points
74% and below	0 points
*the higher of the four-year or five-year cohort rate	

**Attendance Rates:** Average daily attendance rates will be used as an OAI for all schools. These rates will be calculated for all students in grades K-12 enrolled in a school. Average daily attendance equals the aggregate days of student attendance divided by aggregate days of student enrollment in a school.

Schools will be assigned points for attendance rates based on the following criteria (Figure 2.B.9).

Figure 2.B.9: Criteria for Attendance Rates

Average Daily Attendance Rate	Points
95% - 100%	10 points
90% - 94%	8 points
85% - 89%	6 points
80% - 84%	4 points
75% - 79%	2 points
74% and below	0 points

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency Rates:** An OAI for elementary schools will be grade 3 reading proficiency rates. There is significant evidence that 3rd grade reading levels predict success in secondary coursework, secondary course selection, attendance, graduation, postsecondary success, and other important outcomes (Fiester & Smith, 2010. Furgol, Fina, & Welch, 2011. Hanson & Farrell, 1995. Lesnich, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010. Reschly, 2010. Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Grade 3 reading proficiency rates will be calculated by dividing the number of students proficient in reading by the number of students tested using the Iowa Assessments and the Iowa Alternate Assessment. This calculation will include students enrolled for a full academic year in the district. Schools will receive points according to Figure 2.B.10 based on the percentage of students who are proficient.

Stakeholder feedback change: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency rates were added to the OAIs.

Figure 2.B.10: Criteria for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency Rate

Percent of Students Proficient	Points
87% - 100% proficient	10 points
73% - 86% proficient	8 points
59% - 72% proficient	6 points
45% - 58% proficient	4 points
31% - 44% proficient	2 points
30% proficient or less	0 points

The scores for the OAIs are combined with the Achievement Score and become part of the overall Performance Index for a school.

### 3) **The Performance Index:**

An overall Performance Index (PI) is calculated for each school using their Achievement Score as 80 points of the Performance Index and the score for the Other Academic Indicators as 20 points of the index. The resulting score (the Performance Index) is then used for ranking schools for accountability and support.

- The achievement score for each school is multiplied by 0.80 to determine points contributed towards the index.
- The Other Academic Indicators (OAIs) are summed for each school and comprise (as a whole) 20 points of the performance index, and the maximum sum of the OAIs is 20 points.
- The performance index is the sum of the achievement score times 0.80, plus the other academic indicator score. The total possible number of points to accumulate is 100.

$$(\text{Achievement Score} \times .80) + \text{Other Academic Indicator Score} = \text{Performance Index}$$

### 4) **The Closing Gap Score:**

Iowa defines “gap” as the distance between the Achievement Score of subgroups and the target Achievement Score of 85 (for an explanation of the Achievement Score measure, see the Achievement Score section above). An Achievement Score target of 85 represents Iowa’s commitment to raising the achievement of all students including subgroups. Student Achievement Scores will be aggregated at the district and school subgroup level. The state will set individual district and school subgroup trajectories annually based upon their gaps. Subgroup trajectories are calculated by subtracting the difference of their Achievement Score from the state target of 85 and dividing by the number of years remaining (ten years starting with the 2012-13 school year).

Closing Gap scores will be calculated for all ten subgroups:

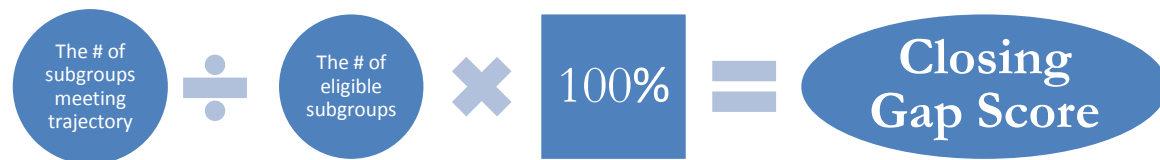
- 7 race/ethnicity categories
  - White
  - Hispanic or Latino

- Black or African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Two or more races
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- Students with Disabilities

If a district has at least ten students in a subgroup, that subgroup will be an eligible (represented) subgroup for each school with at least one student belonging to that subgroup in the district. Schools that have at least ten students in a subgroup will have their own trajectories for each subgroup to achieve. If a school has at least one but less than ten students in an eligible subgroup (at least ten at the district level), the school's subgroup will work towards the district subgroup trajectory. If the district has less than ten students in a subgroup, that subgroup is not eligible. If the school has zero students in a subgroup, but the district has at least ten students in that subgroup, the subgroup is not eligible at that school.

Closing Gap Scores for schools will be calculated by dividing the number of subgroups meeting their specific subgroup school trajectory (or district if less than ten students) by the number of eligible subgroups represented at the school, and then multiplying by 100 (Figure 2.B.11).

**Figure 2.B.11: Formula for the Closing Gap Score**



Schools with a Closing Gap Score of zero will be categorized as Needs Improvement (Focus).

**N Size:** Iowa is proposing to change the minimum N size for subgroup inclusion in accountability calculations from 30 students at the school level to ten students at the district level. This represents a major change from the current method of monitoring the progress of subgroups and will significantly increase the number of students included in the accountability system. The rationale for recommending this action is to include more students in accountability determinations for schools and to monitor the progress of more subgroups of students.

Below is a link to Iowa's State Report Card for 2010-2011 and previous years (Attachment 8).

<http://tinyurl.com/IowaReportCard>

Our change in N size will include substantially more subgroups and students in school

determinations. To show the impact of changing the N size for subgroup inclusion, the 2010-2011 data were reviewed to show the number and percent of schools that would be excluded based upon the N size (Figure 2.B.12). This reduction in N size will have the greatest impact on inclusion rates for students with disabilities and Hispanic students.

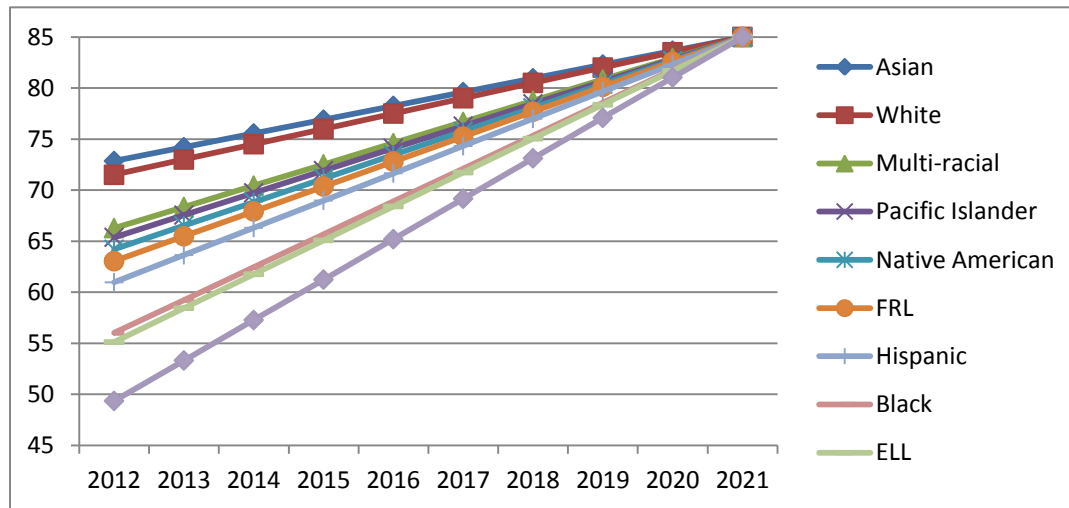
Figure 2.B.12: The School Level Impact of N Size Changes on Inclusion Rates for Subgroups of Students

Subgroup	N of schools with the subgroup	If N=30 # of schools excluded	If N=10 # of schools excluded	If N=30 Percent of schools excluded	If N=10 Percent of schools excluded
Low SES	1324	193	30	14.6%	2.3%
IEP	1308	579	124	44.3%	9.5%
ELL	637	477	329	74.9%	51.7%
African American	794	615	442	77.5%	55.7%
Asian	726	648	489	89.3%	67.4%
Hispanic	1097	818	487	74.6%	44.4%
Native American	407	402	375	98.8%	92.1%
Pacific Islander	167	167	158	100%	94.6%
White	1334	37	20	2.8%	1.5%
Two or more races	822	760	516	92.5%	62.8%

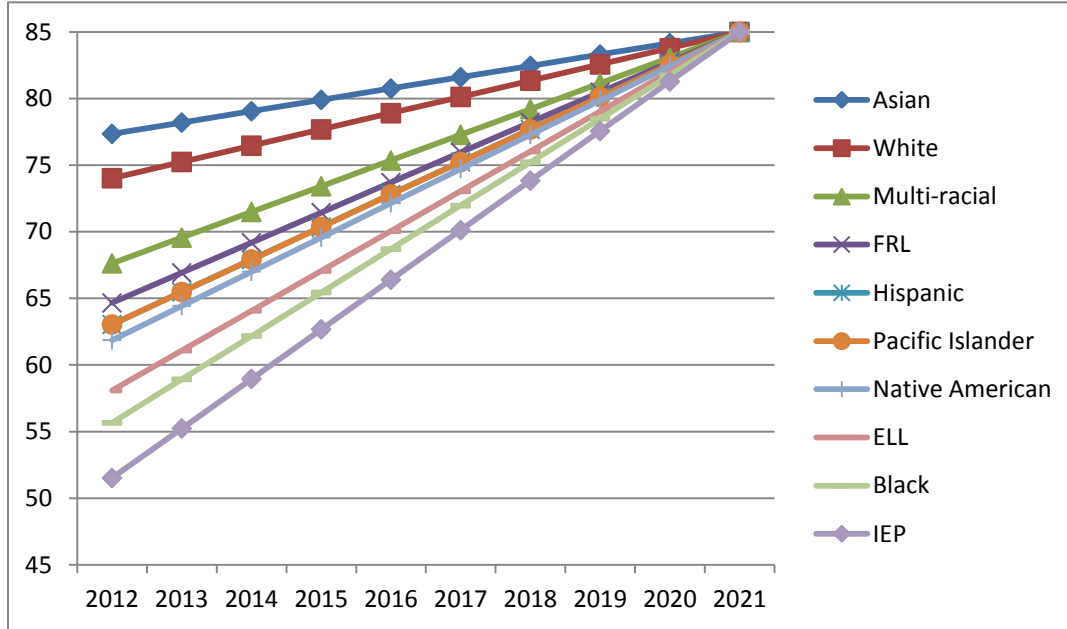
For all subgroups combined, reducing the N size to 10 would yield a reduction of 20% in the rate of exclusions of subgroups for schools. Exclusion rates decreased by more than 30% for students with disabilities and Hispanic students. Exclusion rates decreased by more than 20% for English language learners, African American students, Asian students, and for students of two or more races.

Below (Figures 2.B.13 and 2.B.14) are some sample trajectories at the state level. Actual trajectories will vary by school.

Figure 2.B.13: Ten-Year State Reading Subgroup Trajectories Beginning with 2011-12





**Figure 2.B.14: Ten-Year State Math Subgroup Trajectories Beginning with 2011-12**

## 5) Gatekeeper Measures:

**Test Participation Rates:** The accountability model assumes that all eligible students are participating in the state assessment and included in the data. This participation rate measure will combine all grades (3-8 & 11) and reading and mathematics assessments.

Participation Rate = (grade 3-8 & 11 students assessed in reading + grade 3-8 & 11 students assessed in mathematics) / (grade 3-8 & 11 students enrolled at the time of the reading assessment + grade 3-8 & 11 students enrolled at the time of the mathematics assessment)

Any school with less than 95% of the students participating in the state reading and mathematics assessment will automatically be identified as a Priority School (see performance categories), regardless of their performance index and closing gap score, until their test participation rate meets the criteria of 95%.

**Graduation Rates:** Graduation Rates will be calculated as described in the Other Academic Indicators section above. Any high school with both four-year and five-year cohort graduation rates of less than 60% will automatically be identified as a Priority School (see performance categories), regardless of their Performance Index and Closing Gap Score, until their graduation rate meets the criteria of 60%.

Any high school with both four-year and five-year cohort graduation rates of less than 60% for

any subgroup (with a minimum n size of ten) will automatically be identified as a Needs Improvement (Focus) School (see performance categories), regardless of their Performance Index and Closing Gap Score, until their graduation rates for all subgroups meets the criteria of 60%.

In this way, graduation rate serves a gate keeping function by automatically identifying schools that fail to graduate at least 60% of their students, for all students and for each subgroup.

### **Iowa's Performance Categories**

Iowa will rank schools annually based on their overall Performance Index, Closing Gap Score, Participation Rates, and Graduation Rates into categories. These categories will be used to define support.

1. Exceptional = Reward School (Distinguished = three or more consecutive years as Exceptional)
2. High Performing
3. Commendable
4. Acceptable
5. Needs Improvement = Focus School (Unacceptable = three or more consecutive years as Focus)
6. Priority = Priority School (Unacceptable = three or more consecutive years as Priority)

#### **School Classification Extensions:**

Reliability of longitudinal data validates a school's classification at either end of the spectrum. To account for this, we have two additional categories based on time in the Exceptional and Priority categories. Once a school has been identified as Exceptional for three consecutive years, it is designated as a Distinguished School with specific rewards and recognition being provided. If a school is identified as Priority for three consecutive years, it is designated as an Unacceptable School and additional supports or sanctions will be applied.

Every school will fit into one of Iowa's Performance Categories. We will use the following criteria (Figure 2.B.15) to categorize the schools.

**Figure 2.B.15: Iowa's Accountability System Performance Categories**

<b>Iowa's Performance Category</b>	<b>Federal Category</b>	<b>Performance Index</b>	<b>Participation Rate</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Closing Gap Score</b>
Distinguished	Reward	Placed in the Exceptional category for three consecutive years			
Exceptional	Reward	79 or more	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	100
High Performing	N/A	69 to 78	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	100
Commendable	N/A	69 or more	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	1 to 99
Acceptable	N/A	57 to 68	>=95% for all students and all subgroups	>=60% for all students and all subgroups	1 to 100
Needs Improvement	Focus	57 or more	>=95% for all students; <95% for one or more subgroups—automatic placement in Needs Improvement	>=60% for all students; <60% for one or more subgroups—automatic placement in Needs Improvement	0
Priority	Priority	56 or less All SIG* schools	<95% for all students—automatic placement in Priority	<60% for all students—automatic placement in Priority	0 to 100
Unacceptable	Priority	Placed in the Priority for three consecutive years			
Unacceptable	Focus	Placed in the Focus for three consecutive years			

\*School Improvement Grant

In summary, there is a five-step process for categorizing schools:

1. Calculate Performance Index, using the Achievement Score and OAI Score, for all schools
2. Calculate Closing Gap Score for all schools
3. Determine school participation rates and graduation rates for automatic Priority classifications
4. Determine subgroup participation rates and graduation rates for all school for automatic Needs Improvement (Focus) classifications
5. Define classification for the remainder of the schools based on their Performance Index and Closing Gap Score

These category determinations will be made for all schools each academic year.

The criteria for the categories were established by reviewing the current status of districts in the state using the measures described above and considering the percentages of Title I schools that must be included in the highest and lowest performing categories. Once the cut-points were established for the current year, those cut-points will become criteria and remain the same in future years making our accountability system a criterion referenced system. This provides schools an opportunity to “move-out” of low performing categories as the state improves performance in all schools. However, once a school has been placed in one of the two lowest performing categories, they will receive support for three years regardless of whether they move out of that category during that timeframe.

### **Support for Schools and Exiting Strategies**

Schools will be classified into performance categories on an annual basis and will be labeled according to the criteria for categorizing Iowa schools based on performance (Figure 2.B.15). Supports for schools will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, but schools that are identified as Needs Improvement (Focus) or Priority will receive a minimum of three years of support regardless of annual school classifications. For example, in year one of the new accountability system, School A is classified as “Priority” and it will be noted they are in year one for support purposes. In year two, School A meets the criteria to be classified as “acceptable,” but will be noted as year two for support purposes. In year three, School A meets the criteria to be classified as “commendable,” but will be noted as year three for support purposes.

Based on the requirements of the waiver, utilizing 2010-11 data, Iowa currently has almost 18% of Title I schools categorized as Needs Improvement (Focus) and over 7% of Title I schools identified as Priority. Iowa’s accountability model is designed to be a criterion based model with identified cut points for schools to work toward. The Iowa Support Team, describes in 2.D and 2.E, will support schools to increase their performance and move out of the Priority and Needs Improvement (Focus) categories. With a statewide effort, we hope to see the number of Priority and Needs Improvement (Focus) schools decrease. A school list of Exceptional (Reward), Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority schools in Iowa based on the 2010-11 data is included as Attachment 9, but a summary of the distribution of Iowa schools is listed in Figure 2.B.16.

It is Iowa’s goal to move away from an accountability model that blames and shames schools and toward a model that recognizes schools for their achievements and properly classifies them into performance categories while continuing to support them to ensure consistency with success.

**Figure 2.B.16: Summary of distribution of Iowa schools**

Iowa's Performance Categories	Performance Index	Closing Gap Score	N of All Schools	Districts for All Schools	% for All Schools	N Title I Schools	Districts for Title I Schools	% Title I Schools
Exceptional	79 or more	100	47	33	3.6	30	23	5.2
High Performing	69 to 78	100	92	65	7.1	49	44	8.5
Commendable	69 or more	1 to 99	506	226	38.9	241	170	41.7
Acceptable	57 to 68	1 to 100	286	179	22.0	112	74	19.4
Needs Improvement	57 or more	0	238	155	18.3	105	86	18.2
Priority	56 or less All SIG schools	0 to 100	132	71	10.1	41	17	7.1
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1301</b>	<b>Duplicated count</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>Duplicated count</b>	<b>100</b>

To summarize the Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority numbers in Figure 2.B.16, see the following:

Needs Improvement (Focus) Schools include:

- 94 schools for missing subgroup participation rate (35 Title I),
- 5 schools for having a subgroup graduation rate of less than 60% (0 Title I), and
- 139 schools for having a Closing Gap Score of 0 (70 Title I).

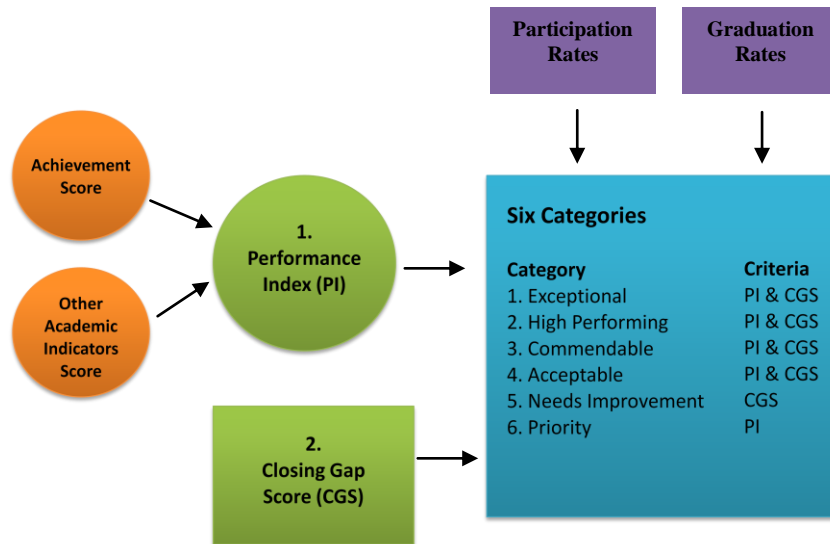
Priority Schools include:

- 9 SIG schools (all Title I),
- 25 schools for missing participation rate (4 Title I),
- 6 schools for having a graduation rate of less than 60% (1 Title I), and
- 92 schools for having a low Performance Index (27 Title I).

**Summary of the Proposed Accountability Model:** In summary, Iowa's proposed Accountability Model includes an Achievement Score (including proficiency and growth) and an Other Academic Indicators score (including graduation rates for high schools, attendance rates, college readiness rates, and third grade reading proficiency) (Figure 2.B.17) that are added together to create a Performance Index for the school. A Closing Gap Score is also calculated for every school based on the gap between the performance of subgroups and the statewide ten-year target (an Achievement Score of 85 for all subgroups). Specific criteria have been set for the Performance Index and Closing Gap Score which are then used to place all schools into one of six performance categories. Schools with participation rates of less than 95% and graduation rates of less than 60% for all students will automatically be placed in the Priority classification. Schools with participation rates of less than 95% and graduation rates of less than 60% for any subgroup will automatically be placed in the Needs Improvement (Focus) classification. Placement into the performance categories has implications for specific actions related to accountability and support. In addition, three or more years as an Exceptional School causes specific types of recognition and rewards to be provided to the school and three or more years as a Priority School causes the school to be labeled as Unacceptable with additional supports and sanctions being applied to that school.

As Iowa rolls out our new accountability system and has several years of data, there may be a need for adjustments and changes necessary to the specific measures and calculations of our model.

**Figure 2.B.17: Summary of the Accountability Measures and School Categories**



**Data Collections and Reporting Performance Data to Schools and Stakeholders:** During the initial implementation of the proposed accountability system, data will be utilized from existing data collections that are in place. This will not create any additional burdens for districts and schools. The transition to include future OAI's will include plans for implementing new data collections and will address any capacity issues for districts and schools to ensure that this information is able to be easily submitted.

EdInsight, Iowa's educational data warehouse, continues its rollout with new data, reports and users delivering on the vision of Empowering Iowa Educators through Data. Over 2000 users have been trained and the system is actively being enhanced. The warehouse provides AEAs, districts, and schools with a system to evaluate individual students and group performance over time. There are over a dozen pre-formatted reports that have been developed and are available from three major data sets (assessment, students with disabilities and student level enrollment and curriculum data) with plans to extend in both reporting, data sets and training both now and in the future. With assessment data being updated monthly for all statewide locations, educators can more quickly assess students and compare with other locations.

All indicators, including Achievement Scores, Other Academic Indicators (graduation rates for high schools, attendance rates, college readiness rates, and third grade reading proficiency), participation rates, and the Performance Index score will be made available to schools and stakeholders through EdInsight. Public stakeholders will only be able to see summary results which meet a minimum n size of ten. However, school and district staff will have the ability to drill down to individual student results in order to perform targeted interventions. This timely availability of key data will facilitate data-based decision-making at the district and school levels.



Training is required for EdInsight access and is provided by EdInsight instructors through our nine Area Education Associations throughout the state and through some of our larger districts.

Communications to all EdInsight users is conducted via our listserv with each application release and when Assessment data is updated for the user's location. EdInsight is presented through the IDE web site, meetings and training sessions with schools and districts.

### Proposed Future Measures

There are other indicators of academic success and progress we would like to include in our accountability model; however data are not yet available for those indicators. Iowa has been focused on education reform starting with an Education Summit in the summer of 2011. Based on feedback received from the summit, a plan to reform education in Iowa has been written with many pieces being proposed in legislation. The future measures we plan to add to our accountability model align with Iowa's Blueprint for Education Reform. Iowa's potential future measures include the following:

- A value-added model for looking at achievement data that extends upon the growth model we are proposing in this system
- Additional Assessments
  - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)
  - Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)
  - End-of-Course Exams
- Additional College and Career Readiness Indicators
  - College Entrance Exams
  - Post-Graduation Data
  - Career Readiness Exam
- Safe & Supportive Schools Indicators
  - Suspension and Expulsion Rates
  - Parent Satisfaction
  - Levels of Student Engagement
  - Staff Working Conditions
- A School Challenge Index (or measuring “At Risk” students) for weighting specific challenges schools and districts are facing that have an impact on the performance of their students
- Response to Intervention Measures

**A Value-Added Model:** A value-added measure (VAM) is not a test. Rather, it is a method of analyzing assessment data that accounts for student background, demographics, and prior performance in determining whether students are making expected growth from year to year. For the most part, Iowa uses an “achievement” method of determining school progress – meaning the measurement of whether students are able to score above the proficiency line. While the percentage of students who meet proficiency is important, we have to recognize that students

come to us from different starting points. In evaluating our schools and educational programs, we have to take student growth and background demographics into account when interpreting the data. Most econometric studies evaluating the effects of educational programs use VAM as the determinant variable on whether the program had any effect on student learning.

VAM is a powerful, sophisticated, and complex statistical approach to looking at student data. This measure would also be the backbone of how Iowa would measure student growth as part of our accountability system through the federal waiver process of the No Child Left Behind law. Pending legislative appropriation of \$1.5 million, Iowa proposes to add value-added modeling to its accountability framework in 2012-13.

Iowa's Blueprint for Education Reform, "One Unshakable Vision," includes a growth model as a part of the statewide reform efforts. When legislative approval and appropriations are enacted, Iowa will replace the growth model in this proposed accountability system with a value-added model. Iowa will use value-added analysis to measure *how much* of an impact the school has on student achievement. A scoring system and other measures are being developed and will be evaluated to determine the applicability of these variables into the accountability model.

**Additional Assessments:** There are various consortiums working on new assessments for Iowa. Additional details about these groups follow:

#### **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

Iowa is a governing member of SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The SBAC is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To achieve the goal that all students leave high school ready for college and career, SBAC is committed to ensuring that assessment and instruction embody the CCSS and that all students, regardless of disability, language, or subgroup status, have the opportunity to learn this valued content and show what they know and can do.

With strong support from participating states, institutions of higher education, and industry, SBAC will develop a balanced set of measures and tools, each designed to serve specific purposes. Together, these components will provide student data throughout the academic year that will inform instruction, guide interventions, help target professional development, and ensure an accurate measure of each student's progress toward career and college readiness.

#### **Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)**

There is a growing need for new innovative assessments as states move to the new [Common Core State Standards \(CCSS\)](#). In 2010, the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System Consortium (DLM) was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Through the grant, DLM will develop an exciting new kind of alternate assessment aligned to the new CCSS.

The DLM project is guided by the core belief that all students should have access to challenging grade-level content. The new DLM alternate assessment system will let

students with significant cognitive disabilities show what they know in ways that traditional multiple-choice tests cannot. The DLM system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction. In this way, testing happens as part of instruction, which both informs teaching and benefits students. An end-of-the-year assessment will be created for states that want to include a summative test in addition to the instructionally embedded system.

Iowa is a governing member of the General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) 1% National Alternate Assessment Dynamic Learning Maps Consortium. Iowa will incorporate Alternate Assessment performance within AMOs and OAI's.

There are two types of assessments being developed as part of the DLM Consortium.

- An Instructionally Embedded Test- available August 2014
- A Stand-Alone Summative Test-available Spring 2015

It has not yet determined which assessments will be used in Iowa. That decision will be made following Iowa's participation in a small scale pilot during the 2012-2013 school year.

### **End-of-Course Assessments**

The inclusion of end-of-course assessments is currently part of *Iowa's Blueprint for Education Reform*. Legislation has been proposed to put in place a suite of end-of-course assessments at a cost of \$2 million. The assessments will be for core subjects such as English (reading and writing), algebra, biology, and U.S. history or government in all Iowa high schools. As described in Principle 1, these tests will assess deeper application of content knowledge. Iowa teachers will assist in the development and standard setting of end-of-course assessments. These measures would set clear expectations for high school courses and provide a statewide systems check for student performance in core subjects. A cut-score for students to pass the end-of-course assessments would reinforce clear expectations and would be required for graduation. Significant remedial help would be provided for students who fail, along with multiple opportunities to retake the assessments. If passed, this legislation will be implemented by July 1, 2014.

**College and Career Readiness:** Iowa is looking at multiple measures to be used as indicators of college and career readiness. A few indicators can be included in the new accountability system immediately. Additional measures, described below, will be added as possible.

**Current Plan for Predicting College and Career Readiness:** College- and career-ready means the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at a postsecondary institution without the need for remediation. The ACT is a college entrance exam. Pearson, publisher of the ACT, reports that the following cut scores on the ACT test, by subject, are considered to represent college and career readiness:

- Reading – 21
- Mathematics – 22

Scores on individual Iowa Tests have been mapped to the above targets of readiness on the ACT test and can be linked for grades 5 through grade 11 (Welch & Dunbar, 2011. Furgol, Fina, & Welch 2011). The following 11<sup>th</sup> grade National Scale Scores (NSS) on the Iowa Tests represent readiness based on data from the Iowa Testing Programs:

- 11<sup>th</sup> grade NSS for college readiness (Iowa Assessment)
  - 306 – Reading
  - 306 – Math

**College Entrance Exams:** *Iowa’s Blueprint for Education Reform* includes college entrance exams for all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. Legislation has been proposed that will require all 11<sup>th</sup> graders to take a college entrance exam (such as ACT or SAT) with the estimated \$2.5 million cost covered by the State. This measure would give Iowa data comparable to a number of other states, provide a screen for monitoring our students’ readiness for college or a career, and give every Iowa teenager one of the keys needed for pursuing higher education. Ensuring students are college- and career-ready is a critical component of our Blueprint for Education Reform in Iowa and of this waiver proposal.

If passed, this legislation will be implemented by July 1, 2014.

**Post-Graduation Data:** Iowa is planning to pursue measures on post-graduation data such as Indicators C11 and C12 from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund data reporting requirements. The C11 indicator is the number of students who enroll in an institution of higher education within 16 months of high school. The C12 indicator is the number of students who enroll in an institution of higher education within 16 months and complete at least one year’s worth of college credit within two years of enrollment.

In addition, Iowa’s “I Have a Plan Iowa” website provides tools to assist students starting as early as middle school to prepare for college. The link to the website is:

<https://secure.ihaveaplaniowa.gov/>

Through this website, parents and educators can assist students with career and college planning, including such things as:

- Career planning
- College planning timeline
- Learning about colleges and universities
- Learning about paying for college
- Exploring eligibility for financial aid

Iowa plans to explore utilizing these measures in the future as part of the accountability model.

**Safe & Supportive Schools:** A wealth of school culture research exists regarding risk and protective factors for children and youth. Results are clear – ignoring school safety; student, staff and parent engagement; as well as connectedness to school and the environment within which all school activities and interactions occurs leads to significant deficits in school culture support

systems. Even with significant investments in curriculum and instruction, Iowa’s trend lines for reading and math are essentially flat and achievement gaps for poor, minority, disabled, and English language learners are not closing. Therefore, it is essential to identify measures that provide critical data on indicators of school culture and either promote conditions for learning or remediate barriers to learning. Nationally, policy is supportive of state measurement systems for conditions for learning that are equally as robust as those linked to student academic achievement in core content areas. As achievement across the country begins to hit a ceiling, educators and policy makers are starting to understand the clear link between academic achievement and students’ strong connection and engagement to learning that is maximized within a safe and supportive environment – an environment that includes students, parents, and school personnel.

Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools (IS3) is the first step in understanding optimal conditions for learning and leveraging resources toward maximum benefit for students, their families, and the school personnel who support them.

As part of our future accountability model, we plan to:

- Utilize suspension/expulsion data to look at incidents per population and determine measures to include this as part of the OAIs.
- Include data from a student survey for grades 6-12. We will also be looking at the possibility of extending this survey down to 4th grade.
- Include parent and staff survey data as part of this index.

**Challenge Index:** We have been studying the use of at-risk measures to build a School Challenge Index to possibly include in our accountability model. These measures would weight specific challenges schools and districts are facing that have an impact on the performance of their students.

**Response to Intervention:** The State is in the process of defining indicators of a healthy system, additional measures for monitoring student progress, and universal screeners. As these things are developed and implemented statewide, we plan to implement them into our model of accountability.

## 2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

### Classifying Exceptional (Reward) Schools

Iowa used annual data from 2010-11 for identification of Reward Schools. Iowa’s model includes two scores for looking at achievement: 1) proficiency (highest-performing) and 2) growth (high-

progress). A school that has an overall Performance Index of 79 or higher and is meeting 100% of its subgroup trajectories based on their Closing Gap Score is classified as an “Exceptional” school.

Federal Classification	Iowa’s Classification	Performance Index (PI)	Closing Gap Score
Reward	Exceptional	79 or above	100

2.C.ii Provide the SEA’s list of reward schools in Table 2.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

### Distinguished and Exceptional Schools

Exceptional Schools meet the ESEA definition of Reward Schools; however, Iowa has made a further distinction for schools that remain in the Exceptional classification for three or more consecutive years. These schools earn the status as Distinguished School. A statewide committee will be established in the spring of 2012 to further define the structure of each reward and to develop a plan to measure the impact of the recognition.

Iowa has designed three areas of recognition: **(1)** state recognition, **(2)** increased flexibility, and **(3)** opportunities for leadership. (See Figure 2.C.1)

**1. State Recognition:** The State will recognize Title I and non Title I schools.

Distinguished and Exceptional Schools status recognition includes:

- A Governor’s award recognizing the distinction,
- A logo specifying Exceptional School classification for use on the school’s website and in other communications, and
- Increased publicity from the Iowa Department of Education highlighting the school’s classification as a Distinguished or Exceptional school including identifying and profiling these schools on the Department’s website, in press releases, and in other publications.

In addition, Distinguished School status recognition includes:

- Enhanced logo specifying Distinguished School status
- A day of recognition by state officials, which may include a proclamation from the Governor and/or a joint resolution from the Legislature. Schools may have staff and students participate in this recognition at the state capitol or may choose to have state officials visit their school and community.

**2. Increased flexibility in compliance monitoring and decision-making:** Distinguished and Exceptional Schools will follow the universal school improvement process as is required for all schools. However, the new tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring will provide them with increased autonomy. These schools will identify areas for consultation and feedback through their Self Study, rather than have them prescribed by the accreditation team. In addition the accreditation team will use this process to identify potential strategies or initiatives for inclusion in the Clearinghouse.



- 3. State of Iowa Studio Schools:** A Distinguished School may apply to be a Studio School. Studio Schools are those proven to be effective in eliminating achievement gaps and increasing levels of high achievement and are willing to mentor other schools. Identified Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority Schools will be encouraged to seek mentorship from Studio Schools.

Studio Schools will add this distinction to their Distinguished School logo.

Figure 2.C.1: Differentiated Recognition

<b>Differentiated Rewards:</b> (1) state recognition, (2) increased flexibility, and (3) opportunities for leadership
<b>Exceptional Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor’s award</li> <li>• Increased publicity</li> <li>• Flexibility in monitoring and decision-making</li> <li>• Logo for school use on letterhead and website</li> </ul>
<b>Distinguished Schools</b> —Classified Exceptional for three or more consecutive years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the rewards for Exceptional schools</li> <li>• Enhanced logo</li> <li>• Day of recognition by state officials</li> <li>• May apply to become an Iowa Studio School—effective at eliminating achievement gaps and increasing high achievement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mentor Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority schools</li> <li>○ Add this distinction to their Distinguished School logo</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Stakeholder Input

(1) The classification to recognize schools that are high achieving over time was suggested by Iowa educators at a stakeholders’ meeting. (2) Initially the State titled the classification Iowa Reward School, but later a stakeholder group suggested changing from Iowa Reward School to Distinguished School as the classification for these schools to indicate the status rather than what they received. (3) Surveys completed after statewide presentations to a variety of stakeholder groups indicated a preference for public recognition and mentor rewards rather than rewards that require expenditure of funds better used to support struggling schools.

## 2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

**2.D.i** Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g.

based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Iowa calculated a Performance Index for all schools using an Achievement Score and a score for Other Academic Indicators. Priority Schools are schools with a performance index of 56 or below. Even though this cut-point was identified to ensure that at least 5% of the lowest performing Title I schools would be included in the “Priority” category, this cut-point will now become the criteria for this category creating a criterion referenced system for categorizing schools. It is anticipated that as schools improve the performance of all of their students, there will be less than 5% of Title I schools that are identified as “Priority” in future years. In addition, all schools that received School Improvement Grants (SIG) were included in this category.

In the future, any school that remains in the Priority category for three consecutive years will be labeled Unacceptable and additional supports and sanctions will be applied to this school.

Federal Classification	Iowa’s Classification	Performance Index (PI)	Closing Gap Score
Priority	Priority	56 or below All SIG schools	Various

2.D.ii Provide the SEA’s list of priority schools in Table 2.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Iowa is committed to building SEA, AEA, LEA, and school capacity to educate all students to high standards. Our state will improve the quality of instruction and student learning and eliminate achievement gaps through aligning our fractured system of accountability and support. Our redesigned system will support implementation of Turnaround Principles in Title I Priority Schools as well as school improvement efforts in non Title I Priority Schools. The unified system (1) is founded on one set of principles, one tool, and one process for continuous improvement, (2) implements Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports with fidelity, (3) aligns universal systems of support for all schools, and (4) aligns differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) Schools.

**Differentiated Support:** Support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) Schools will include (1) all the universal supports outlined below, (2) a more rigorous site visit protocol including comprehensive monitoring as outlined above in the newly designed tiered process, (3) the Iowa Support Team to guide the System for Improved Student Success process, and (4) interventions and sanctions. Revisions in Iowa Administrative Code will be sought to require these in non Title I schools.

## Universal Supports

All schools will engage in school improvement through the Seven Characteristics of Effective and Improving Schools, the C-Plan, and the System for Improving Student Success. All schools will be supported in the following ways.

**Response to Intervention (Turnaround Principles: strengthening school’s instructional program and using data to inform instruction):** From 2003 to 2011 Iowa implemented a process called Instructional Decision-Making (IDM) which was a prototype of Response to Intervention (RtI). IDM was developed by a team of Iowa general educators, special educators, and administrators and information was disseminated to a contact person in each Area Education Agency (AEA). With this train-the-trainer model (AEA contacts provided training to individual schools), IDM was not implemented consistently across the state. In some schools where IDM was in place, it was not integrated into practice as an on-going approach to improving learning. Because of the lack of success of IDM, it became apparent a more concentrated and prescriptive approach to RtI implementation was necessary.

As presented in Principle 1, RtI is a multi-tiered framework by which schools use data to identify the academic supports each and every student needs to be successful in school and leave school ready for life. In their review of 13 studies investigating the impact of RtI on academic achievement or performance, Hughes and Dexter (2011) found some level of improvement in all studies, primarily on early reading and math skills.

The critical components of RtI include:

- robust universal instruction,
- universal screening to identify learning difficulties early,
- evidence-based, targeted instruction and intensive interventions matched to student needs,
- progress monitoring tools to adjust instruction to improve student learning outcomes, and
- data-based decision making tools to evaluate the overall health of their system and determine which of the evidence-based practices and interventions are effective with their students.

The comprehensive school improvement planning process includes the implementation of RtI to specifically address the individual needs of each and every student and eliminate achievement gaps for English Language Learners, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), low income students, and minority students.

In order for all Iowa’s students to meet proficiency and become college- and career-ready, it is imperative that RtI be implemented with fidelity in each Iowa school. With renewed emphasis on this approach as a general education initiative, the state will address the lessons learned from implementation of the IDM process. Iowa is now in the process of implementing RtI in a way that will ensure consistency and fidelity across the state. The initial focus of RtI in Iowa is on providing evidence-based instruction in reading for kindergarten through third grades and on selection of universal screening and progress monitoring tools. In the future RtI will expand to mathematics as well as to other grade levels. This implementation process is described in the detailed timeline in Appendix 2-C.

**Learning Supports (Turnaround Principles: addressing non-academic factors that impact student achievement and mechanisms for family and community engagement):** We will continue to implement our system of Learning Supports to develop a comprehensive and cohesive system of supports to remove barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. Research-based strategies such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the Olweus anti-bullying program are currently being implemented in schools throughout the state. Results of research suggest a reduction in school bullying and an increase in behavioral supports will result in improved student learning and other positive behavioral and emotional outcomes for all students.

These learning supports encompass the need for creating the right environment for learning and teaching through (1) a cohesive system that provides classroom-based strategies designed to enhance engagement and re-engage disconnected students, (2) safe, healthy and caring learning environments, (3) community partnerships, (4) student engagement and involvement, (5) supports for transition, and (6) family supports and involvement.

These interventions-emphasize families and communities as critical partners at all levels, as well as alignment at school, district, regional, and state levels. Learning Supports interventions use a three-tiered system that parallels the three tiers in RtI and include: (1) promoting healthy development and preventing problems (universal); (2) intervening as early after onset of a problem and implementing proactive supportive interventions (targeted), and (3) providing intensive interventions for those with severe, pervasive, and chronic problems (intensive).

IDE will continue to align state resources to support these programs, which reduce behavior problems, dropouts, and disproportionality in discipline; increase graduation rates; close achievement gaps, and help schools prepare students to be college- and career-ready. The ten Iowa high schools that received the Safe and Supportive Schools grant (S3) are now looking at their data and planning interventions, and 24 percent of Iowa's schools are implementing PBIS. In order to ensure fidelity of implementation, we will continue to recruit schools for implementation of these initiatives at the current rate, with the plan that once RtI is fully implemented throughout the state, the focus will widen to include PBIS and other learning supports in statewide implementation.

**Tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring:** Iowa school districts are reviewed on site every five years based on standards present in Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) 281.12. A school improvement site visit based on the Seven Characteristics occurs as a part of this continuing accreditation process. Elements of continuous improvement, including needs assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation occur each year.

Continuous improvement will occur differently in our new system. How needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation (SISS) are implemented in the new tiered system is dependent upon the classification of the school, and in-turn, the classification of the LEA regardless of Title I status. The primary focus is on school and district continuous improvement planning for recurring implementation and evaluation of programs and services. The Seven Characteristics anchor the entire cycle of continuous improvement planning.

The tiered accreditation and compliance monitoring process is described in more detail in section 2.D.iii.

In addition to the accreditation system, districts and schools are monitored through State approval of the C-Plan, including Continuous Improvement Plans, as well as Title I and School Improvement Grant (SIG) monitoring processes.

**Iowa Core (Turnaround Principle: strengthening the school’s instructional program):** The Iowa Core identifies the skills needed to be successful in Iowa’s new reality: the critical learnings—knowledge and skills—that students will need to succeed in a rapidly-changing, technology-rich, information-dense 21<sup>st</sup> century. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core in literacy and math. The Iowa Core, which now includes the Common Core in math and literacy, is centered on a well-researched set of standards in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) and directly relates to college and career readiness.

The vision for the Iowa Core is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. The Iowa Core is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and lifelong learning. It identifies the essential content and instruction of critical content areas that all students must experience.

To support the Iowa Core and a shift from a culture of teaching to a culture of learning, the Seven Characteristics, the characteristics of effective instruction, and the professional development initiatives were developed to help educators create student-centered classrooms focused on students and learning rather than teachers and teaching. Iowa teachers are expanding their knowledge of learning and pedagogy as they develop the content of the Iowa Core into rigorous and relevant lessons that help them teach for understanding and for learner differences. The IDE and educators across Iowa continue to investigate more informative, effective, and authentic assessment for learning to guide instruction.

The shift from a culture of teaching to a culture of learning also requires a change in focus and environment requires that content, instruction, and assessment be aligned to develop the competencies and habits of mind that are essential for future success in college, careers, and citizenry in an increasingly complex and global society. IDE identified the following six “universal constructs” as the building blocks for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- critical thinking,
- complex communication,
- creativity,
- collaboration,
- flexibility and adaptability, and
- productivity and accountability.

School districts that implement the Iowa Core with integrity increase the likelihood that all students become life-long learners, productive adults, and engaged citizens. Once educators understand the interplay among the content of the Iowa Core, the Seven Characteristics, the characteristics of effective instruction, and the universal constructs, they will be better equipped to create educational environments and experiences that prepare students for college, career, and citizenry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**System for Improving Student Success (SISS):** Currently the Iowa Support Team works with all Title I Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA) and Districts in Need of Assistance (DINA) guiding them through the five phases (explained below) of the System for Improving Student Success. All schools and districts will use SISS; however, districts with schools classified as Needs Improvement (Focus) or Priority will continue to have Iowa Support Team guidance through the phases of the system. Plans are in place to request changes in Iowa Administrative Code to require all schools and districts, Title I and non Title I, to annually complete the School or District Continuous Improvement Plan as well as a Self Study of the previous year's plan. The template for the current planning tool is included in Appendix 2-D. The process is explained further under Priority Schools (2. D. iii)

**Instructional Clearinghouse:** Iowa's blueprint for education, *One Unshakable Vision* released by Governor Terry Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds on October 3, 2011, describes plans to establish an "Iowa Center for Literacy Education" to act as a clearinghouse for best practices and research-based information (p.10). (<http://tiny.cc/OneVision>)

While still in the planning stages, work has begun to determine criteria for evaluating strategies to be included. The vision of the center is to develop a library of evidence-based strategies and routines that will improve student learning and assist students in becoming college- and career-ready. In addition, Iowa is a recipient of a federal Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant designed to support statewide measurement of and interventions for school safety, engagement and environment. As part of this grant, to ensure implementation of evidence-based interventions, programs in the learning support area are being rated according to the scale in Appendix 2-E. This rating system was developed as part of the S3 grant and will be expanded to include academic interventions and programs with scores made available to districts through the Clearinghouse.

The Clearinghouse will provide information on a variety of evidence-based practices including information regarding standard implementation capacity, evidence of success, professional development, and replication. These interventions will be rated as potential, promising, or exemplary. Strategies and practices in each of the critical components of RtI will be identified from this rigorous evaluation process.

Funded through existing state funds, the Clearinghouse will provide information, access to professional development, and ratings of best practices, including interventions aligned with the Turnaround Principles. This Instructional Clearinghouse will be expanded to support Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority Schools. Lessons learned from schools, specifically those with School Improvement Grants engaged in dramatic reinvention and focused attention to eliminating achievement gaps, will be detailed so other schools may replicate proven and promising strategies. Specific to subgroups, resources and information for reducing the achievement gap for students with IEPs, minority students, students in poverty, and English Language Learners will be provided.

**Family and Community Engagement (Turnaround Principle: ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement):** A key finding in the research on family involvement and engagement suggests the continuity of family involvement appears to have a protective effect on children as they progress through our complex education system. The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, the more the children tend to do well in school and continue their education beyond high school. Family and Community Engagement is one of the



Turnaround Principles required for implementation by Title I Priority schools. Family and Community Engagement is one of the Seven Characteristics and is, therefore, included in the School Continuous Improvement Plan.

**Other Statewide, Data-Driven Decision Making Initiatives:** Data-driven decision making is an embedded component of many of the statewide initiatives that are focused on improving teaching and learning at the Pk-12 level and at the universities and colleges throughout Iowa. Content area initiatives like Every Child Reads and Every Student Counts have data components that focus on implementation of practice and student learning results. These initiatives model a school wide action research process.

Programs of practitioner (teacher and administrator) preparation leading to licensure in Iowa are subject to approval by the State Board of Education per 281-IAC 79.1. Practitioner preparation programs include teacher, principal, superintendent, school guidance counselor, school social worker, speech/language pathologist, and school psychologist.

There are six standards as part of the seven-year cycle of program approval: Governance and Resources, Diversity, Faculty, Assessment System and Unit Evaluation, Clinical Practice, and Curriculum (knowledge, skills, and dispositions). Programs must submit documentation for all six standards and be subject to an onsite review.

Teacher education candidates must demonstrate acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the professional core. Competency must be exhibited in assessment, both understanding methods of assessing student performance and in using data in instructional decision making. “The candidate understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the student, and effectively uses both formative and summative assessment of students, including student achievement data, to determine appropriate instruction” (281 IAC - 79.15).

Additionally, at the PK-12 and higher education level, the Iowa Evaluator Approval courses use a data-driven decision making process that asks participants to gather and use implementation and student achievement data in the evaluation of teachers as they craft an individual professional growth plan. At the institutions of higher education, Chapter 79 of the Iowa Code requires all teacher and administrator preparation programs to have a data-drive decision making component woven into the curriculum standard.

### **Differentiated Support**

All schools will engage in school improvement through the Seven Characteristics of Effective and Improving Schools, the C-Plan, and the System for Improving Student Success. Iowa offers the following differentiated support for schools. (Also see Figure 2.D.2. below.)

**Tiered Accountability and Site Visit:** Currently site visits for accreditation and compliance monitoring occur on a five-year cycle and follow the same format for all districts. The primary focus has been compliance with no formal structure or accountability for infusing school improvement planning into the process. The new accreditation and compliance monitoring system will continue to occur on a five-year cycle, but it will be tiered according to school classification and the Self Study

data to meet the school improvement needs of individual districts. IDE plans to seek revision to Iowa Administrative Code to require all schools, Title I and non Title I, to comply with all aspects of the new accreditation monitoring system, such as the annual School Continuous Improvement Plan and Self Study.

Our new plan for site visits provides more/better support to schools and districts by:

- replacing the one-size-fits-all site visits with three levels of site visits,
- providing support based on the district or school student achievement data, (the needier the school/district, the more support provided rather than an environment of equal support for all schools/districts),
- matching the type of support to the needs of the school/district,
- including site visit IDE team members whose expertise can provide meaningful support to address the needs of the school/district rather than simply by who is available,
- expanding the Iowa Support Team to assist non-Title schools, which are the most in need of assistance, rather than being restricted to Title-only schools, and
- aligning collaborative work of the Iowa Support Team and the school improvement consultants, rather than working in isolation.

Components of the site visit process include a desk audit, School Continuous Improvement Plan review, accreditation team composition, Document Review Checklist, interview protocol, district overview, and follow up visits. The new tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring will have three levels, dependent upon the classification history of the schools within the district and the Self Study. The Bureau of Accreditation and Improvement Services will consult with the district regarding the level of the visit and make the final decision.

This process will be piloted during the 2012-13 school year in up to 10 percent of districts with accreditation visits during that year, including districts of varying sizes and characteristics. Full implementation will begin during 2013-14. During the spring of 2012, the Bureau of Accreditation and School Improvement will collaborate with the Bureau of Information and Analysis to articulate the business rules for determining the level of an accreditation visit, including considerations for accreditation visits involving districts that are engaged in \*Whole Grade Sharing, as well as the impact of N size on classifications of smaller districts and the potential need to consider multiple years of data to make accreditation visit decisions.

\*Whole Grade Sharing: Iowa districts that are still legally two or more districts but house different grade levels in among the participating districts. Usually participating districts continue to house an elementary school with one middle school and one high school centrally located. Districts partnered in Whole Grade Sharing engage in their site visits concurrently.

### **Site Visit Components by Level:**

- All Levels:
  - Document Review Checklist is required for all levels.
  - Desk Audit is required and occurs annually. It requires completion of the C-Plan with the ability to revise and update continually throughout the school year. The C-Plan includes the following components: Continuous School Improvement Plan, Annual Performance Report, SINA/DINA plan, District Developed Service Delivery Plan, and Iowa Core Plan (state and federal assurances).
- Differentiated components are outlined in the Figure 2.D.1 below.

Figure 2.D.1: Tiered Site Visits

	Level I	Level II	Level III
<b>School Continuous Improvement Plan Review</b>	Annual IDE certification of C-Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual IDE certification of C-Plan</li> <li>Completion of District and School Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP)</li> <li>District completion of CIP Self Study</li> <li>Focus on district identified characteristics from the Seven Characteristics based on Self Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual IDE certification of C-Plan</li> <li>Completion of District and School CIPs Plans</li> <li>District completion of Continuous Improvement Plan Self Study</li> <li>Focus on all Seven Characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>Site Visit Accreditation Team</b>	Leadership: School Improvement Consultant Team Membership*: IDE, LEA, AEA staff *Number on team depends on district size.	Leadership: 1 School Improvement Consultant Team Membership*: Title I: 1 Title I Consultant IDE, AEA, LEA staff Non Title I: IDE, LEA, AEA staff *Number on team depends on district size..	Leadership: Title I: 1 School Improvement Consultant 1 Title I Consultant Non Title I: 2 School Improvement Consultants Team Membership*: Title I: IDE, AEA, LEA staff Non Title I: IDE, AEA, LEA staff *Number on team depends on district size.
<b>Interview Groups</b>	None IDE peer review of School CIP and District Self Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholder groups</li> <li>Seven Characteristics addressed and Self Study determine need to interview multiple groups in any interview category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholder groups</li> <li>Self Study determines need to interview multiple groups in any given interview group category</li> </ul>
<b>Interview Protocol</b>	None Desk audit and IDE peer review of School Continuous Improvement Plan and District Self Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristics addressed and Self Study determine:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions selected for each interview group</li> <li>Amount of time for interview</li> <li>Any additional questions needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>Visit length anticipated to be 2-3 days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All protocol across all Seven characteristics</li> <li>Visit length anticipated to be 3-5 days</li> </ul>
<b>District Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address all Seven characteristics</li> <li>Provide summary of District Continuous Improvement Plan including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District process for collecting data regarding CIP implementation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address all Seven Characteristics</li> <li>Provide summary of District CIP including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District process for collecting data regarding CIP implementation</li> <li>District process for monitoring CIP action steps (Did you do what you said you were going to do?)</li> <li>Data collected regarding fidelity of CIP implementation</li> <li>School level data regarding goal attainment</li> <li>And the connection of each of these to future CIP planning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address all Seven characteristics</li> <li>Provide summary of District Continuous Improvement Plan including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District process for collecting data regarding CIP implementation</li> <li>District process for monitoring CIP action steps (Did you do what you said you were going to do?)</li> <li>Data collected regarding fidelity of CIP implementation</li> <li>School level data regarding goal attainment</li> <li>And the connection of each of these to future CIP planning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Follow-up Visits</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled, as needed, at the discretion of School Improvement Consultant</li> <li>May be on-site, electronic (i.e., Polycam or Skype) or desk audit</li> <li>Team consists of 1-2 IDE and AEA district contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required Title:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-site</li> <li>Scheduled at least annually or more often at the discretion of the School Improvement and Title consultants (SIG scheduled quarterly)</li> <li>Team consists of School Improvement and Title Consultant and AEA district contact</li> </ul> </li> <li>Required Non Title:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-Site</li> <li>Annually at a minimum</li> <li>1 IDE and AEA district contact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**System for Improving Student Success (SISS):** The Iowa Support Team guides the school or district through the five phases of SISS—a needs assessment phase, analysis phase, planning phase, implementation phase, and evaluation phase.

- **Needs Assessment:** Review of school data to identify Areas of Concern: This phase focuses on the collection and analysis of district/school data to identify strengths and areas of concern in order to design the action plan to increase student achievement. The team will:
  - collect and analyze district/school data,
  - develop a district/school profile, and
  - determine the strengths and area(s) of concern based on the preliminary analysis in preparation for a more focused review by the district/ school.
- **Analysis Phase: Completion of a gap analysis based on the comparison of the current reality with the desired state:** The team reviews prioritized areas from the needs assessment summary. Through a comparison of the current reality with the desired state, a gap analysis is completed. The root causes that are contributing to the area(s) for further study are identified. If/then statements and/or a theory of change based on possible solutions are created as a final step to set the stage for the goals or action plan steps in the design phase.
- **Planning Phase:** Development of a three-year action plan based on if/then statements and supporting evidence. This phase provides for the development of an action plan to address the prioritized areas of concern in order to increase student achievement. The district/school collaborates with the support team to design a three-year action plan that:
  - increases the proficiency of their students in the identified area(s) of concern, incorporates the Iowa Professional Development Model to provide teachers with additional or enhanced skills within the area(s) of concern,
  - develops the capacity of leadership within the district/school,
  - integrates state-wide initiatives/programs where appropriate,
  - demonstrates how resources (e.g., time, dollars, expertise) are dedicated to the achievement of the plan,
  - aligns with the district's Comprehensive Plan (C-Plan),
  - provides both formative and summative evaluation strategies,
  - includes strategies for increasing the involvement of parent engagement, and
  - incorporates actions for appropriate primary elements for the characteristics based on the identified areas of concern.

Each school will select interventions and supports which best meet the needs of their students and staff to implement Turnaround Principles.

- **Implementation Phase:** Delivery of the intervention with ongoing assessment of student achievement: This phase provides the professional learning that develops the capacity of teachers and leaders in the school to provide opportunities that increase students' achievement. The District Continuous Improvement Plan is designed to support implementation of the school plan; therefore, the school and district leadership teams:
  - assure the delivery of the intervention,
  - facilitate ongoing support to the building/district staff members,

- provide for ongoing formative assessment and data collection; and
- build the capacity of the district/school for ongoing school improvement.

LEAs and schools will invest in the skills of staff through these phases by implementing imbedded professional development focusing on the turnaround principals incorporated into the Seven Characteristics. Professional development will be on-going, informed by teacher evaluation, and will reflect both teacher and student needs.

- **Evaluation Phase:** Formative and summative evaluations and updating of action plan based on student achievement data: This phase provides for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention(s) for student achievement and provides the support for recommendations that assure sustainability. The building/district leadership team:
  - evaluates the effectiveness of the intervention(s);
  - reports findings and recommendations to district/school, their stakeholders, and IDE, and
  - determines recommendations for adjustments to the action plan

AEAs are critical players in this process, coordinating the school support teams and providing content-level and special education expertise. They work directly with district and building leadership teams in all phases of the action plan, often leading and always supporting the building. A systemic approach, focusing on the district, is utilized to build capacity and promote sustainability within the identified school.

The Iowa Support Team has fairly consistently implemented the audit (looking at data), diagnosis (analyzing data) and design (writing the SINA/DINA plan) but needs to review what has changed within education in Iowa (e.g. we have better access to data) since the roll out of the SISS and based on those changes, modify the audit and diagnosis phases of our process. In addition, we will revisit how we are working with districts/schools to implement and monitor their plans and monitor and assess that their plans are having an impact on student achievement. We will define and implement consistent processes and procedures. This team has historically focused on supporting schools; however the proposed change within the waiver will focus support on districts to provide a systemic approach, the SISS team will need review and plan how to switch the focus from supporting schools to supporting districts.

**Interventions and Sanctions:** In addition to the SISS process, the following will also be required of all Title I Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority (Priority), or Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years). Revisions in Iowa Administrative Code will be sought to require these of non Title I schools.

- **Parent Notification:** Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority (Priority), or Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools will be required to notify parents of school status and share the interventions implemented through their School Continuous Improvement Plans.
- **Turnaround Principles:** Meaningful interventions designed to improve the academic achievement of students in Title I Priority schools must be aligned with all of the Turnaround Principles delineated in ESEA Flexibility guidance. These principles have been

cross walked with the Seven Characteristics. (See Appendix 2-A.) The state will support graduated implementation of the Turnaround Principles in the 3 Title I Priority schools beginning in 2012-13 and ensure full implementation of the principles by 2014-15. Selected interventions aligned with each Turnaround Principle will be implemented for at least three years. The State will develop a plan to monitor implementation of Turnaround Principles. The plan will include accreditation follow-up visits as well as other mechanisms for monitoring. The state will also encourage and provide technical assistance and guidance to non Title I Priority Schools choosing to implement Turnaround Principles.

- **Technical Assistance for Waivers:** Schools in this classification will be provided IDE assistance to investigate innovations that have been proven to increase student achievement and to determine the need to request any waivers from Iowa Administrative Code. This intervention was suggested by Iowa educators at our stakeholders' meeting.

Stakeholder Input
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- **Charter Options:** As an option to address a school's focus or priority status, a district might choose to pursue charter status per Iowa Code 256F by converting the entire school or a part of the school (school-within-a-school) to address the low achievement. The charter application shall clearly describe the innovation(s) which are based on need as indicated by the school's student achievement data.
- **State Review Panel:** A State Review Panel will be established to review and approve school improvement plans for districts with schools in their third consecutive year as Needs Improvement (Focus) or Priority schools, as well as, districts with Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools. The panel will also review and approve the plans for the individual schools with those classifications. A rubric will be designed to guide the panel in this review and approval process.
- **Set-aside of Title I Funds – Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority Schools, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three consecutive years):** Districts with schools classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three consecutive years)—except those classified for participation—that receive Title I funds will be required to set-aside 20% of their district Title I allocation for:
  - implementation of Turnaround Principles (takes precedence in Priority Schools),
  - Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) for students
  - professional development

Extended Learning Opportunities include such things as tutoring or summer school for students. These Extended Learning Opportunities will be designed by districts and schools to meet the unique needs of the students they serve.

Districts will be provided flexibility in prioritizing any Extended Learning Opportunities made available to ensure students most in need are provided services.

Revisions made to the School Continuous Improvement Plan in the C-Plan will include a component for districts to assess the impact of these services on student achievement.



Figure 2.D.2: Differentiated Supports

<b>Differentiated Supports</b>
<b>All Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal principles, tool, and process for School Improvement Planning</li> <li>• Instructional Clearinghouse</li> <li>• Response to Intervention</li> <li>• Learning Supports</li> <li>• Tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring</li> <li>• Iowa Core</li> <li>• System for Improving Student Success</li> <li>• Extended Learning Opportunities</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• Pilots for RtI (elementary level)</li> <li>• Iowa Support Team</li> <li>• Parent Notification</li> <li>• Gradual Implementation of all Turnaround Principles</li> <li>• Technical assistance for identifying promising innovations and the exemptions from Chapter 12 necessary to implement with fidelity</li> <li>• More focused School Improvement Site Visit with more extensive follow up</li> <li>• Title I set-aside funds</li> <li>• Schools in their third year in this classification will have their school improvement plan reviewed and approved by the State Review Panel</li> </ul>
<b>Unacceptable Schools</b> —Priority for three or more consecutive years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• State Review Panel review and approval of district and school improvement plan</li> </ul>

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.

See Figure 2.D.3 for an abbreviated timeline including implementation of the Turnaround Principles in Priority Schools by 2014–15 the school year. IDE will allow schools to implement interventions aligned with two to three of the Turnaround Principles each year to ensure fidelity of implementation. For a detailed timeline of implementation see Appendix 2-C.

Figure 2.D.3: Abbreviated Timeline

2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement SEA, AEA, LEA communication system for all elements of the approved ESEA Flexibility Request</li> <li>• Design system to evaluate fidelity of implementation of ESEA Flexibility Request and impact on student achievement</li> <li>• Begin process to seek needed changes to Iowa Administrative Code</li> <li>• Identify RtI assessment tools</li> <li>• Build statewide data system for RtI</li> <li>• Design and program tools for data analysis and reporting of new accountability model</li> </ul>
2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement system to evaluate fidelity of implementation of ESEA Flexibility Request and impact on student achievement</li> <li>• Implement C-Plan for all districts and Continuous Improvement Planning Tools component for Title I schools</li> <li>• Revise District/School Continuous Improvement Plan for universal use</li> <li>• Develop and implement District/School Self Study of Continuous Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Refine Iowa Support Team school improvement planning process for use by all districts and schools</li> <li>• Finalize collaborative design of Clearinghouse</li> <li>• Pilot tiered system of accreditation</li> <li>• Detail structure of school recognition (Distinguished and Exceptional Schools)</li> <li>• Detail structure of interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) and Priority Schools</li> <li>• Design system to measure the fidelity of implementation &amp; impact of support/interventions for Needs Improvement/Priority schools and process to make adjustments as needed</li> <li>• Create consensus, infrastructure, PD model for RtI</li> <li>• Identify cohorts for LEA implementation of RtI</li> <li>• Develop research and evaluation plan for RtI</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority begin implementation of Turnaround Principles (2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Define and design elements of a value added model</li> <li>• Implement new accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze “Safe &amp; Supportive Schools” suspensions and expulsions data to define measures to include in the accountability model</li> </ul>
2013-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement tiered system of accreditation statewide</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority in continue implementation of Turnaround Principles (add 2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Define college and career readiness data elements and assessments and implement into Iowa’s accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze “Safe &amp; Supportive Schools” student engagement, parent satisfaction and staff working conditions data to define measures to include in the accountability model</li> </ul>
2014-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement</li> <li>• Schools identified as Priority fully implement Turnaround Principles (add final 2-3 Principles)</li> <li>• Implement additional assessments such as the Smarter Balanced Assessments, Dynamic Learning Maps and end of course exams</li> <li>• Study the use of at risk measures to build a school challenge index to possibly include in the accountability model</li> <li>• Analyze data to define Response to Intervention (RtI) measures to possibly include in the accountability model</li> </ul>

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Once a school meets a Performance Index of 56 or above, they will be removed from the “Priority” list. See Figure 15 “Criteria for Classifying Iowa Schools” above. Schools will be classified into performance categories on an annual basis and will be labeled according to the criteria for categorizing Iowa schools based on performance (Figure 15) above. Supports for schools will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, but schools that are identified as Needs Improvement (Focus) or Priority will receive a minimum of three years of support regardless of annual school classifications. For example, in year one of the new accountability system, School A is classified as “Priority” and it will be noted they are in year one for support purposes. In year two, School A meets the criteria to be classified as “Acceptable,” but will be noted as year two for support purposes. In year three, School A meets the criteria to be classified as “Commendable,” but will be noted as year three for support purposes.

It is Iowa’s goal to move away from an accountability model that blames and shames schools and toward a model that recognizes schools for their achievements and properly classifies them into performance categories while continuing to support them to ensure consistency with success.

## 2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

Schools that are classified as “Needs Improvement (Focus)” are defined by subgroup gaps. Those schools that have none of their subgroups meeting their trajectories have been classified in this group. To determine which schools are on the “Needs Improvement (Focus)” list, we first ranked schools based on their Performance Index to identify schools in the “Priority” category. We then calculated the Closing Gap Score for each remaining school by taking the total number of subgroups the school has meeting their trajectory divided by the number of eligible subgroups x 100% and identified those schools that met 0% of their subgroup trajectories as the “Needs Improvement (Focus)” schools.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 2.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA’s focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Needs Improvement (Focus) Schools will follow all processes and timelines for Priority (Priority) Schools outlined in 2.D. Implementation of RtI, as outlined above, will support work to eliminate achievement gaps. See Figure 2.E.3 below.

In addition, Needs Improvement (Focus) schools will receive targeted assistance related to working with diverse populations and assistance related to the specific achievement gap(s) indicated by student data (e.g. English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Race, Ethnicity, Social Economic Status).

Schools that remain in the Needs Improvement (Focus) classification for three or more consecutive years will be classified as Unacceptable.

### Sub-group Achievement Gaps

All schools and districts will continue to be held accountable for decreasing achievement gaps. All schools now have access to and are required to use disaggregated student achievement data through the EdInsight Pk-12 data warehouse. Development of the data warehouse, in addition to training educators in using this warehouse and developing reports, occurred through a Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant received from the US Department of Education in 2009. In addition to on-going data reviews, the following initiatives will be implemented to close the achievement gap.

**Response to Intervention:** IEP and ELL students who are not proficient or not growing academically require:

- early screening to avoid on-going failure and future low-expectations for success from others,
- high-quality, evidence-based interventions so instructional time is not wasted on strategies that are not effective,
- high-quality instruction that regularly uses formative assessment,
- regularly monitored and adjusted instruction, based on student performance, and
- an intensity of instruction (universal, targeted, intensive) based on data matched to individual student need.

RtI provides a way for schools to meet these needs. It is a primary process for improving the achievement of low-performing subgroups and decreasing/eliminating achievement gaps. RtI is “a general education response to delivering effective instruction for all students struggling in schools” (Bender, 2009). When implemented with integrity, an RtI system allows the individual needs of all students to be effectively addressed. In his meta-analysis of studies on the factors which influence student achievement, John Hattie (2012) found RtI as one of the most effective, ranking third of 150 approaches assessed, with an effect size of 1.07.

The foundation of RtI is a sound, data-based decision-making process to define the problem, generate and validate assumed causes, determine a course of action, implement the action, and evaluate the outcome. This approach differs from past models of assessing and helping students as RtI integrates assessment and instruction into a data-based system with built-in decision stages (Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004). In the past it was assumed students were learning unless identified otherwise; however, with RtI, assumptions about student learning are confirmed with data.

While it is recognized the number of students requiring academic support may differ from school to school, it is estimated that up to 25% of students nation-wide experience some level of reading difficulty (IRIS Center at Vanderbilt). In addition, students who struggle in reading in the early grades often continue to struggle in later grades. Benefits of RtI as a way of providing early intervention include:

- focuses on prevention,
- provides immediate support to students who are beginning to struggle,
- provides intervention before a student is identified as having a disability,
- depends on high-quality general education instruction,
- reduces inappropriate referral for special education,
- ensures high-quality instruction, so a lack of instruction is not the cause for poor achievement, and
- uses data-based decision making to determine if students need more intensive supports.

In summary, RtI is a multi-tiered system of support to assist students at risk for reading difficulties due to factors such as disabilities, socioeconomic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency before they fall behind (Coyne & Harn, 2006; Bursuck & Blanks, 2010). The RtI approach is designed to meet the needs of individual student and will have a strong and lasting impact on eliminating gaps for all subgroups, therefore, providing children at risk the chance to become a part of shaping Iowa's positive future. As Sugai and Horner (2009) conclude: "Response to Intervention is about closing the achievement gap."

A detailed RtI timeline is included in the timeline in Appendix 2-C.

**Technical assistance in outreach to diverse populations:** Iowa has experienced significant demographic changes over the past ten years. The 86,512 minority students represent 18.5 percent of the student body, yet only 2 percent of Iowa's public-school teachers belong to a recognized subgroup. These demographic changes present considerable challenges to Iowa and its education system.

As in many other states, race, ethnicity, poverty, and disability have been demonstrated to be significant predictors of student achievement. In Iowa, students from social economic, linguistic, and culturally diverse backgrounds often do not fare well in the education system that resulting in disproportionality in achievement, identification in special education, suspensions, drop-out rates, and graduation rates (Grinstead, 2011). (Achievement Gaps in Iowa: <http://tiny.cc/IowaGaps>)

Research indicates varying cultural factors lead to different learning styles and differences in performance (Boykin & Bailey, 2000) in addition, when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the student's experiences and frames of reference, student learning is more thorough, personally meaningful, and has higher interest appeal (Gay, 2000). As a result, the academic achievement of ethnically diverse students improves when they are taught through their own cultural and experiential filters (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Foster, 1995; Gay, 2000; Hollins, 1996; Kleinfeld, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995).

Despite LEAs and AEAs having federally mandated equity coordinators tasked with ensuring the LEA is annually monitoring and orchestrating the LEA's response to achievement gap data, many have felt the need for additional assistance in fulfilling those responsibilities

IDE provides professional development to AEAs and LEAs based on evidence-based, best practices aimed at instructional strategies that have proven effects for all students, across time and settings. Working from the assumption that these strategies are applicable for all students; differences among student groups should be minimized or eliminated. However, IDE has been remiss in evaluating the long-term effects of the professional development on student achievement.

When seeking input from equity coordinators regarding Iowa's waiver application, equity coordinators indicated a key barrier to achievement for minority students was inadequate preparation and knowledge of how to interact effectively with people and environments that differ from each other. Equity coordinators suggested a better understanding of the hidden rules within different economic and cultural structures is warranted in order to have productive relationships with students.

Iowa's State Board of Education has made elimination of achievement gaps one of their stated priorities, stating as their goal the promotion of collaboration among districts, AEAs, the Iowa Department of Education and other appropriate agencies to recognize and address racial disparities in education, developing cultural competence, and implement necessary systemic changes.

Recently, IDE has provided staff resources to identify and address needs that are specific to different groups of students affected by achievement gaps. These resources will be used to integrate and transform knowledge about diverse groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate settings enabling the school or person to interact effectively in a diverse environment; thereby producing better student outcomes.

This development enables IDE to provide specific and relevant technical assistance to the AEAs for the purpose of modifying local strategies based on data, as well as literature. IDE is working with state civil rights agencies in developing materials in assisting in outreach to diverse populations for use by the LEAs and AEAs.

The new accountability system and closing gap score analysis also provides an opportunity for IDE to revise the targeting plan on file with the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for equity visits based in part on schools with large gap scores. This opportunity allows IDE in partnership with the AEAs to prioritize targeted technical assistance to schools designated as Needs Improvement (Focus) in a variety of topics including:

- research in understanding of diverse environments,
- implementation strategies,
- family and community engagement,
- multicultural education,
- principles and concepts for educating citizens in a global society, and
- guided assessment and learning over educating citizens in a global society.



### Addressing Specific Subgroups

Iowa is committed to improve the achievement and college and career readiness for students represented in subgroups.

Discussions of how to best address the achievement gaps for students represented in subgroups resulted in the following questions for an informal survey of a small sample of special education directors, special education teachers, special education support staff, equity coordinators in Area Education Agencies and school districts, and ESL teachers:

- Why are IEP (or minority or ELL) students not achieving at higher levels?
- What are the barriers to higher levels of achievement for IEP (or minority or ELL); and
- What evidence-based strategies are effective for IEP (or minority or ELL) students to achieve at high levels?

Although the survey included small sample size with an open-ended question format, these results may be reviewed as possible indicators of the barriers facing subgroup achievement. The survey results also reinforced our need to look more closely at the barriers to learning as well as the interventions which are likely to have the biggest impact on subgroup achievement.

**Minority Students:** Minority enrollment in Iowa’s public schools has increased annually, from 10 percent in 2000-2001 to 18.5 percent in 2010-2011. Although our data show that we have raised achievement of all subgroups except reading for African American 4<sup>th</sup> graders during that time, the data continue to reveal unacceptable gaps for all subgroups. See Figure 2.E.1 and 2.E.2.

Figure 2.E.1: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading: Percent Proficient on ITBS Reading Comprehension Test

Race	2004-2006	2009-11
African American	55.2	54.7
Hispanic	58.0	63.2
American Indian	64.20	67.9
Caucasian	81.3	83.6

Figure 2.E.2: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading: Percent Proficient on ITBS Reading Comprehension Test

Race	2004-2006	2009-11
African American	44.1	46
Hispanic	47.0	57.6
American Indian	58.4	64.4
Caucasian	74.1	77.5

Interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) schools must be those which are likely to have the greatest achievement impact for minority students and lead to career and college readiness. Specific guidance and support for implementing Response to Intervention, in addition to training in working with diverse populations, will be provided by IDE or AEAs for the districts that have schools with minority student achievement gaps.

Response to Intervention was selected for statewide implementation largely due to its potential impact for specific student groups. For example, the achievement gap for Blacks has been a particular concern in Iowa schools as well as schools across our country. Marks, Woodruff, and Pigatt, (2012) state: “Effective implementation of RTI, therefore, can be a useful and effective tool to reduce disproportionality, narrow the achievement gap, and decrease dropout and unemployment rates among Black and Hispanic at-risk youth” (p. 39). Reports from districts implementing RTI, such as New Hanover County, North Carolina, indicate that disproportionality may be significantly reduced through this framework (Abernathy, 2008). At least one study has further demonstrated that culturally responsive intensive instruction has improved both academic skills and behavior with Black, Latino, and IEP students at the high school level (Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2011).

**Students with Disabilities:** Students identified for special education services comprise 13 percent of Iowa’s certified public enrollment. Special education and related services are provided to identified students by the district or the area education agency. Overall, students with disabilities have the lowest achievement in both math and literacy of all other subgroup.

In their review of 18 studies, Wanzek and Vaughn (2010) found positive outcomes (i.e. higher reading achievement scores) for students with reading difficulties and disabilities who received intensive interventions in the early grades. Response to Intervention provides for such intensive early intervention and other tiered supports, in addition to quality core instruction. Students with IEPs are involved with all three tiers of instruction as needed: universal, targeted, and intensive.

Results from our brief survey (described above) showed that students with IEPs are not achieving because

- More emphasis in middle and high school on tutoring and homework than on specially designed instruction;
- Core curriculum not made accessible through general education;
- An overall culture of low expectations,
- Lack of consistent, intensive instruction, and
- A low level of rigor in this instruction

Interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) schools must be those which are likely to have the greatest achievement impact for students with disabilities and lead to career and college readiness. Specific guidance and support for implementing Response to Intervention, in addition to training in working with diverse populations, will be provided by IDE or AEAs for the districts that have schools achievement gaps for students with IEPs. (Note: Individual interventions will continue to be determined by the student’s IEP team.)

**English Language Learners (ELL):** Iowa’s ELL student population increased from 2.3 percent in 2001 to 4.5 percent in 2011 with Spanish the most frequent language spoken. ELL students are among the lowest achieving subgroups and have lower graduation and school attendance rates than the all-students group. In the past 10 years the overall student population increased by about 2% but the ELL population increased by 150%.

When we asked teachers and ESL coordinators why English Language Learners are not achieving

at higher levels, respondents most frequently cited the following needs:

- Pre-service and in-service professional development on research-based strategies to modify instruction and provide access to the general education curriculum,
- administrators skilled in monitoring and supporting ESL teachers,
- more knowledge of effective ESL programs, and
- better formative assessment to reflect growth and direct instruction

Survey respondents also identified some strategies that are effective in increasing achievement of ELLs. Some of these strategies include cooperative learning, age and grade appropriate instruction differentiated for language, vocabulary development, Response to Intervention, and scaffolding instruction.

These survey results and current research, specifically in the area of early reading, supports an RtI framework to close the achievement gap for English Language Learners (Healy, Vanderwood, & Edelston, 2005; Vaughn, Mathes, Linan-Thompson, & Francis, 2005; Gerber, et.al, 2004) concluding that supplemental, intense interventions can be effective for this subgroup. As cautioned by Brown & Sanford (2011), additional factors for EL learners, such as first and second language acquisitions, and methods and programs for instruction in the native language, must be considered beyond RtI.

Interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) schools must be those which are likely to have the greatest achievement impact for English Language Learners and lead to career and college readiness. Specific guidance and support for implementing Response to Intervention, in addition to training in working with diverse populations, will be provided by IDE or AEAs for the districts that have schools achievement gaps for English Language Learners.

**High Poverty:** The percent of students living in poverty range from 7.8 percent to 78.6 percent in districts across the state. Overall 38.2% of Iowa's students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals. The achievement for this subgroup is one of the lowest performing.

The RtI approach is designed to meet the needs of individual students and will have a strong and lasting impact on eliminating gaps among subgroups.

Interventions for Needs Improvement (Focus) schools must be those which are likely to have the greatest achievement impact for students living in poverty and lead to career and college readiness. Specific guidance and support for implementing Response to Intervention, in addition to training in working with diverse populations, will be provided by IDE or AEAs for the districts that have schools achievement gaps for students living in poverty.

Figure 2.E.3: Differentiated Supports

<b>Differentiated Supports</b>
<p><b>All Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal principles, tool, and process for School Improvement Planning</li> <li>• Instructional Clearinghouse</li> <li>• Response to Intervention</li> <li>• Learning Supports</li> <li>• Tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring</li> <li>• Iowa Core</li> <li>• System for Improving Student Success</li> <li>• Extended Learning Opportunities</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• Pilots for RtI (elementary level)</li> <li>• Iowa Support Team</li> <li>• Parent Notification</li> <li>• Gradual Implementation of all Turnaround Principles</li> <li>• Technical assistance for identifying promising innovations and the exemptions from Chapter 12 necessary to implement with fidelity</li> <li>• More focused School Improvement Site Visit with more extensive follow up</li> <li>• Title I set-aside funds</li> <li>• Schools in their third year in this classification will have their school improvement plan reviewed and approved by the State Review Panel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Needs Improvement (Focus)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• Targeted assistance related to working with diverse populations</li> <li>• Specific assistance related to the achievement gap (e.g. English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Race, Ethnicity, Social Economic Status)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unacceptable Schools</b>—Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above</li> <li>• State Review Panel review and approval of district and school improvement plan</li> </ul>

- 2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Schools are eligible to be removed from the Needs Improvement (Focus) category based on their Closing Gap Score. Once a school has at least one of their subgroups meeting their trajectory and a Performance Index of 57 or higher, they can be reclassified into another category. However, once a school is identified as Needs Improvement (Focus), they will receive at least three years of support. Schools will be identified annually and categorized where they fall based on the criteria

we have set, but we will note their support level (Support 1, 2 or 3).

**TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS**

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

**TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS**

LEA Name	School Name	School NCES ID #	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
See Attachment 9				C	
					H
			A		
					F
					G
<b>TOTAL # of Schools:</b>					

Total # of Title I schools in the State: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: \_\_\_\_\_

Key	
<b>Reward School Criteria:</b> <b>A.</b> Highest-performing school <b>B.</b> High-progress school  <b>Priority School Criteria:</b> <b>C.</b> Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the “all students” group <b>D-1.</b> Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years <b>D-2.</b> Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years <b>6.</b> Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	<b>Focus School Criteria:</b> <b>7.</b> Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate <b>8.</b> Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate <b>9.</b> A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school



## 2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

- 2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

### Supports for Other Title I Schools

Title schools not classified as Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority (Priority), or Unacceptable (Priority or Focus for 3 years or more consecutive years) will be given all the universal supports outlined for all schools in 2.D. See Figure 2.F.1

Figure 2.F.1: Support for All Schools

Supports for All Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal principles, tool, and process for School Improvement Planning</li> <li>• Instructional Clearinghouse</li> <li>• Response to Intervention</li> <li>• Learning Supports</li> <li>• Tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring</li> <li>• Iowa Core</li> <li>• System for Improving Student Success</li> <li>• Extended Learning Opportunities</li> <li>• Family and Community Engagement</li> </ul>

## 2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

- 2.G Describe the SEA’s process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:
- timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
  - ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
  - holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

### Agency Roles in Building Capacity and Monitoring and Adjusting Our Plans

All agencies—schools, local education agencies (LEA)/districts, AEAs, and IDE—have roles and responsibilities in this new system which will ensure the success of the system. (See Figure 2.G.1.) Infrastructure and resources to provide these supports are:

What exists:

- LEAs – Iowa Core Lead Teams charged with implementation of the Iowa/Common Core
- AEA – School Improvement Consultants who support LEA school improvement planning
- AEA – Content specialists who provide LEA professional development
- IDE – Content specialists who provide support for AEA content specialists

What can be repurposed:

- LEA accreditation teams staffed according to school need rather than availability
- AEA – Iowa Support Team broadened to service non-Title I Schools
- IDE – The Seven Characteristics used as a framework for all school improvement efforts for schools in all three designations
- IDE – Alignment and shared responsibility of School Improvement Consultants and the Iowa Support Team to address the needs of low performing schools

What must be created:

- AEA – Support for Turnaround Principles
- AEA – Instructional Clearinghouse
- IDE – Instructional Clearinghouse

Figure 2.G.1 Agency Roles

Agency Roles – System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, Support			
<b>All Agencies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Espouse philosophy of school improvement as the focus of all our work</li> <li>• Embed Seven Characteristics in all our work</li> <li>• Utilize universal school/district continuous improvement planning process (System for Improving School Success)</li> <li>• Utilize universal school/district continuous improvement planning tool (School Continuous Improvement Plan - SCIP)</li> <li>• Promote and support statewide implementation of Response to Intervention</li> </ul>			
School	LEA (District)	AEA	IDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable for improving student performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable for turning around low performing schools</li> <li>• Leverage federal, state, and local funds to ensure support for implementation of interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with IDE and LEAs to create a Clearinghouse of successful Iowa interventions and strategies</li> <li>• Support LEAs through technical assistance in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage federal, state, and local funds to ensure support for implementation of interventions</li> <li>• Partner with AEAs and LEAs to create a Clearinghouse of</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held accountable for ensuring low performing schools are implementing Turnaround Principles with fidelity</li> </ul>	the planning process, support for schools/districts, research-based strategies (through AEA participation on the Iowa Support Team and through individual AEA consultant work with districts)	<p>successful Iowa interventions and strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support AEAs through technical assistance in the planning process, support for schools/districts, research-based strategies</li> <li>• Enhance procedures for timely and comprehensive monitoring and technical assistance for LEA implementation of interventions in low achieving schools</li> <li>• Ensure LEAs implement meaningful interventions aligned with Turnaround Principles for at least 3 consecutive years</li> </ul>
<b>Agency Tasks – Implementation of System of Continuous Improvement</b>			
<b>School</b>	<b>LEA (District)</b>	<b>AEA</b>	<b>IDE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) with a cycle for review, revision, and appropriate professional development for all staff</li> <li>• Follow the locally determined schedule for formative evaluation of school programs and initiatives, including outcome and process data.</li> <li>• Follow the locally determined schedule for summative evaluation of school programs and initiatives</li> <li>• Sustain improvement efforts resulting from the Self Study of the SCIP, site visit recommendations and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the District Continuous Improvement Plan (DCIP) with a cycle for review, revision, and appropriate PD for all staff</li> <li>• Follow the locally determined schedule for formative evaluation of programs and initiatives as noted in the DCIP, including outcome and process data.</li> <li>• Follow the locally determined schedule for summative evaluation of programs and initiatives as noted in the DCIP.</li> <li>• Sustain improvement efforts resulting from the District Self Study of the DCIP, site visit recommendations and non-compliance corrective actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentation of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align AEA professional development supports with the DCIP and SCIPs.</li> <li>• Assist LEA in conducting formative evaluation of programs and initiatives, including outcome and process data.</li> <li>• Assist LEA in conducting scheduled program and initiative summative evaluations.</li> <li>• Provide support as appropriate for implementation of Turnaround Principles</li> <li>• Assist LEA in sustaining improvement efforts resulting from the District Self Study of the DCIP, site visit recommendations and non-compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance and technical assistance regarding continuous improvement efforts, including implementation of Turnaround Principles, at the LEA and AEA levels.</li> <li>• Provide support of LEA efforts to sustain improvement efforts resulting from site visit non-compliance corrective actions and recommendations.</li> <li>• Certify C-Plan</li> <li>• Provide follow-up to LEAs regarding site visit non-compliances appropriate to the statement of accreditation in site visit reports.</li> <li>• Offer opportunity to LEA, AEA, and IDE staff to participate as</li> </ul>

<p>non-compliance corrective actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect data regarding SCIP plan implementation</li> <li>○ Monitor SCIP action steps</li> <li>○ Collect data regarding fidelity of SCIP implementation</li> <li>○ Collect and analyze data regarding school goal attainment</li> <li>○ Triangulate data to inform revisions to SCIP</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage the community, through the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) and other committees and groups in on-going conversations, data analysis, and problem solving regarding major educational needs.</li> <li>● Make revisions to SCIP</li> </ul>	<p>allocation of adequate district resources to ensure implementation of SCIPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect data regarding SCIP plan implementation</li> <li>○ Monitor SCIP action steps</li> <li>○ Collect data regarding fidelity of SCIP implementation</li> <li>○ Collect and analyze data regarding school goal attainment</li> <li>○ Triangulate data to inform revisions to SCIP and DCIP</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage community, School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) and other committees and groups in on-going conversations, data analysis, and problem solving regarding major educational needs.</li> <li>● Make revisions to DCIP and approve SCIPs</li> <li>● Certify DCIP and SCIPs</li> </ul>	<p>corrective actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coach and consult LEAs in the review and revision of its Improvement Plans, programs, and initiatives.</li> <li>● Assist LEA in engaging its community, SIAC, and other committees and groups in ongoing conversations, data analysis, and problem solving regarding major educational needs.</li> <li>● Communicate with LEAs through administrative team or LEA leadership team meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>team members on a comprehensive site visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide technical assistance and guidance on any new State, Federal, or program requirements.</li> </ul>
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### Summary

**An Aligned System Focused on Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support:** Our redesigned system will (1) be founded on one set of principles, one tool, and one process for continuous improvement, (2) embed Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports to support all students, (3) align with universal systems of support and rewards for all schools, and (4) align with differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools.

#### 1. One set of principles, one tool, one process

- One set of principles: The Seven Characteristics for Improving Schools and Districts
- One tool: Consolidated Plan (C-Plan)
- One process for continuous improvement planning:

#### 2. Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports to Support All Students: Supports for student learning will be embedded into the continuing improvement process for all schools.

**3. Current and developing universal systems of support of all schools:**

- Tiered system of accreditation and compliance monitoring, including State approval of the C-Plan, Title I and SIG monitoring, and the Iowa Support Team
- Iowa Core,
- Response to Intervention (RtI),
- System for Improving Student Success (SISS),
- Clearinghouse,
- Support for Cultural Proficiency
- Learning Supports, and
- Focus on Sub-group Achievement Gaps: Racial Equity, Special Populations, and English Language Learners (ELL).

**4. Differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable schools** including support by the Iowa Support Team.

Since Iowa is a local control state, the selection of professional development providers is a local district decision. Districts will be guided to refer to local district policies, to utilize data from their district/school improvement plans, and to evaluate the effectiveness of services when selecting vendors. Schools using Title I funds for extended learning opportunities will be required to include a process to evaluate the impact of these services on student performance.

These changes for education in Iowa will replace our fractured system with a system focused on differentiated recognition, accountability, and support.

Therefore, if Iowa (1) operates under on one set of principles, one tool, and one process for continuous improvement, (2) embeds Response to Intervention (RtI) and Learning Supports for all students, (3) aligns universal systems of support of and rewards for of all schools, and (4) aligns differentiated support for Needs Improvement (Focus), Priority, and Unacceptable (Focus or Priority for three or more consecutive years) schools, then Iowa will meet our objective of improving the quality of all schools in order to provide an excellent education for all students.

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## PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

### 3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;</li> <li>• a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>• an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;</li> <li>• evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>• a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul>
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#### Iowa’s Plan to Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

**Historical Perspective and Current Practice:** Both teacher and administrator evaluation in Iowa have historically been viewed as a function supporting personnel decisions. Iowa also has a long history of “local control” allowing districts to shape their own professional criteria for teaching based on a broader set of standards from the state level. The Iowa Department of Education (IDE) developed Iowa’s Teaching Standards in 2001. In 2003, the Iowa State Legislature sought to improve evaluation by implementing the Iowa Teaching Standards based on the work of Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. In the Model Framework for Designing a Local Staff Evaluation System (Iowa Department of Education, 2003) it states:

Teacher evaluation should provide opportunities for teachers at different developmental

stages to be involved in processes and activities appropriate to their experience and expertise. In addition, teacher evaluation should be heavily focused on the formative aspects of evaluation, using staff-directed activities for the purpose of promoting professional development, especially development focused on improving student achievement as determined by district achievement goals.

Additionally, the 2003 legislation established the Teacher Quality Program incorporating a mentoring-induction program for new teachers. Iowa Code 281-83.1 states:

The goal of the teacher quality program is to enhance the learning, achievement, and performance of all students through the recruitment, support, and retention of quality Iowa teachers. The program will contain specific strategies that include a mentoring and induction program for beginning teachers, teacher evaluations, and district and building support for professional development that includes best practice aimed at increasing student achievement.

During the 2007 legislative session, districts were directed to develop and implement an evaluation system for administrators based on the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). The minimum requirement of Iowa law is that persons new to administration have a comprehensive evaluation during their initial year of employment. Best practice is for administrators who assume a new administrative position is to have a summative evaluation during their first year in the new position. After the initial comprehensive/summative evaluation the law requires an annual formative assessment around the principal's Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). The three-year summative evaluation requires documentation of competence on the six ISSL, meeting of district expectations drawn from the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and building improvement plan, IPDP attainment, and other supporting documentation.

In 2007, legislators addressed leadership standards in Iowa by requiring the Department of Education to devise a comprehensive administrator performance review process. The legislation specified the following actions (Iowa Department of Education, 2007):

- Align with the Iowa School Leadership Standards and Criteria
- Be intended to acknowledge and improve performance
- Connect academic, social, emotional and developmental growth for all students in the building/system
- Recognize the importance of a principal's role in improving the culture of the learning community
- Have research-based criteria about effective principal behaviors which are substantiated by measurable data from multiple sources, and are legal, feasible, accurate and useful
- Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth as a facilitator/leader of learning
- Be ongoing and connected to school improvement goals
- Align building and district goals with community members' vision for education

While the State of Iowa's history reveals a commitment to the development of effective teachers and administrators, the past ten years indicate that leaving much of the implementation to the discretion of local districts has resulted in marginal gains in educator effectiveness. Although so much has improved since 2003 much work remains if Iowa intends to have an effective administrator leading

every school and district and an effective teacher in every classroom. In order to improve Iowa's evaluation system, IDE has targeted specific goal areas:

#### Probationary Teachers and Administrators

- Requiring three annual evaluations for all probationary teachers and administrators
- Promoting professional learning by having a trained instructional coach assist probationary educators in designing, revising, and implementing professional growth plans
- Establishing differentiated performance tiers to specific performance rubrics for both teacher and administrator evaluation models (See Appendix 3-A)

#### Career or Non-Probationary Teachers and Administrators

- Requiring a three-year professional review cycle for teachers resulting in a summative evaluation by a trained evaluator
- Requiring annual performance evaluations for administrators
- Supporting teacher development with peer reviews during non-evaluative years of professional review cycle
- Establishing differentiated performance tiers tied to specific performance rubrics for both teacher and administrator evaluation models (See Appendix 3-A.)

Current law poses significant barriers to accomplishing the goals above:

- Probationary teachers are evaluated at least twice a year.
- Probationary administrators are evaluated once a year.
- Career teachers and administrators are evaluated at least once every three years.
- Currently evaluations contain only a “meets” and “does not meet” criteria.

In order to best serve and involve Iowa teachers in the change process, proposed legislation recommends the creation of a task force composed primarily of practitioners to accomplish the goals stated above. The task force will provide guidance in terms of how the peer reviews might function including such issues as frequency, observation instrument, qualifications, and training. Only certified and trained evaluators will perform summative evaluations.

An equity task force will also consider the potential role of artifacts, collected electronically, as a measure of effectiveness for teacher evaluation.

**Current Legislative Action:** As a primary effort of reform, Iowa is making legislative proposals to change the current teaching standards, which have been in place since 2001, to the nationally developed InTASC standards in order to have a unified and consistent foundation for teacher effectiveness at all levels. In addition, the state is proposing policy change to the existing teacher evaluation system to one that is consistent, equitable, and based on effective teaching research. Intensive training for evaluators is planned to support these policy changes, as is professional development for all educators, following a field test and pilot to determine viability of the new system. Accompanying the standards will be criteria and rubrics that clearly identify the proficiency levels for candidates and teachers from pre-service to the apprentice, career, mentor and master levels. This will help to ensure teacher development for evaluative purposes and growth throughout the career of the teacher pre-service preparation to the classroom. This will support professional

growth and change that will enhance the profession of each individual, as well as provide leadership roles that have not been afforded teachers in the past. InTASC link: <http://tiny.cc/InTASC>

Currently, Iowa Legislators are debating SSB 3009 (<http://bit.ly/wvwOlp>)/HSB 517 (<http://bit.ly/xxGmuK>). This omnibus education reform bill supports the enhancement of Iowa's teacher and administrator evaluation systems. Section 9 of the proposed bill specifically addresses the improvement of Iowa's evaluation systems by recommending:

- A statewide teacher and administrator evaluation system that school districts, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools will use to standardize the instruments and processes used to evaluate teachers and administrators throughout the state
- The components of the statewide teacher and administrator systems that will include but not be limited to the following:
  - Direct observation of classroom teaching or building leadership behaviors
  - Strong consideration of student outcome measures, when available for tested subjects and grades, to validate direct observation behaviors.
  - Integration of the InTASC and Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL).
  - System applicability to teachers in all content areas taught in school.
- Adoption of a teacher and administrative evaluation plan that, at minimum, requires frequent performance reviews based upon InTASC or ISSL and individual professional development plans.

Section 15 of SSB 3009/HSB 517 establishes a statewide educator system task force appointed by the Director of Education. The task force, at a minimum, will include in its recommendations and proposal a tiered evaluation system that differentiates ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective performance by teachers and administrators. The task force will submit its findings, recommendations, and a proposal for each system to the state board of education by October 15, 2012.

Section 112 of SSB 3009/HSB 517 establishes the use of a value-added assessment system as a method to measure gains in student achievement by conducting statistical analysis of achievement data that reveals academic growth over time for students and groups of students. A value-added system will be established and implemented by IDE not later than July 1, 2013, to provide for multivariate longitudinal analysis of annual student test scores to determine the influence of a school district's educational program on student academic growth and to guide school district improvement efforts. The system provider will, at a minimum, meet all of the following criteria:

- Use a mixed-model statistical analysis that has the ability to use all achievement test data for each student, including the data for students with missing test scores, that does not adjust downward expectations for student progress based on race, poverty, or gender, and that will provide the best linear unbiased predictions of school or other educational entity effects to minimize the impact of random errors.
- Have the ability to work with test data from a variety of sources, including data that are not vertically scaled, and to provide support for school districts utilizing the system.
- Have the capacity to receive and report results electronically and provide support for districts utilizing the system.
- The system provider will create a mechanism to collect and evaluate data in a manner that reliably aligns the performance of the teacher with the achievement levels of and progress of

the teacher's students. School districts will report teacher-to-student alignment data to the system provider as directed by IDE.

**Adaptive Change and Intelligent Accountability:** The IDE seeks to adhere to the very instructions put forth in the ESEA Waiver: “Does the SEA’s plan include sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of guidelines?” Before addressing any specific percentage of student achievement in the evaluation process, IDE plans to collaborate with LEAs in order to mobilize practices that promote clarity within the process and reveal a commitment to fairness in evaluation measures. Nevertheless, the IDE considers value-added as one of the options available for addressing student achievement as a part of the evaluation process, but other options will also be considered through the process, though the IDE recognizes these to be less statistically sophisticated and accurate. In moving forward IDE wishes to respect concerns about statistical validity and reliability yet reinforce that Iowa should not merely discard or ignore the data but rather improve the data.

By employing the use of value-added measures, a school district will have complete access to and full utilization of its own value-added assessment reports and charts generated by the system provider at the student level for the purpose of measuring student achievement at different educational entity levels. The IDE will provide overt guidance on how to utilize student achievement as part of the evaluation process recognizing both the inferential power as well as the limitations.

Where student outcome measures are available, the outcomes will be considered by the district to validate a teacher’s observational evaluation. Student outcomes measures which are a component of a teacher’s evaluation are not public records for the purposes of Chapter 22.

Consequently, the IDE recognizes the need to involve the field in researching best strategies for negotiating fair and equitable practices of gauging student achievement for the approximately 70% of untested subjects. IDE will convene an advisory group, primarily consisting of practicing teachers and administrators, to develop and assess alternative measures of student achievement. Current research and practices across the nation include:

- Participating in on-site arena scoring for untested subjects utilizing common performance tasks or student portfolios
- Examining student performance on pre-tests compared to end-of-course/unit tests
- Incorporating a school-wide measure of student growth
- Using norm-referenced tests such as the Stanford-10, ACCESS, or Terra Nova
- Utilizing interim assessments such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- Developing student learning objectives (SLOs) from teacher and district goals

The process will examine appropriate options for non-tested academic courses and non-tested performance courses (e.g. music, art, physical education). The following questions (based on the work of Dr. Laura Goe and Lynn Holheide (<http://tiny.cc/MeasuringTeachers>)) will anchor the advisory group’s work:

- What measurements reflect progress towards college and career readiness and mastery of subject?



- Does the measurement assess between two points in time?
- Is the measurement comparable across classrooms within a district or within a state?
- Are content standards in place in order to formulate the basis on which measures can be either identified or developed?
- Can the measures be applied to all student populations?
- Is there a standardized means of evidence collection?
- Should the IDE approve all measures used by districts?
- Do districts have the capacity to implement processes for assessing student growth?
- How might the IDE encourage districts to work cooperatively by region?

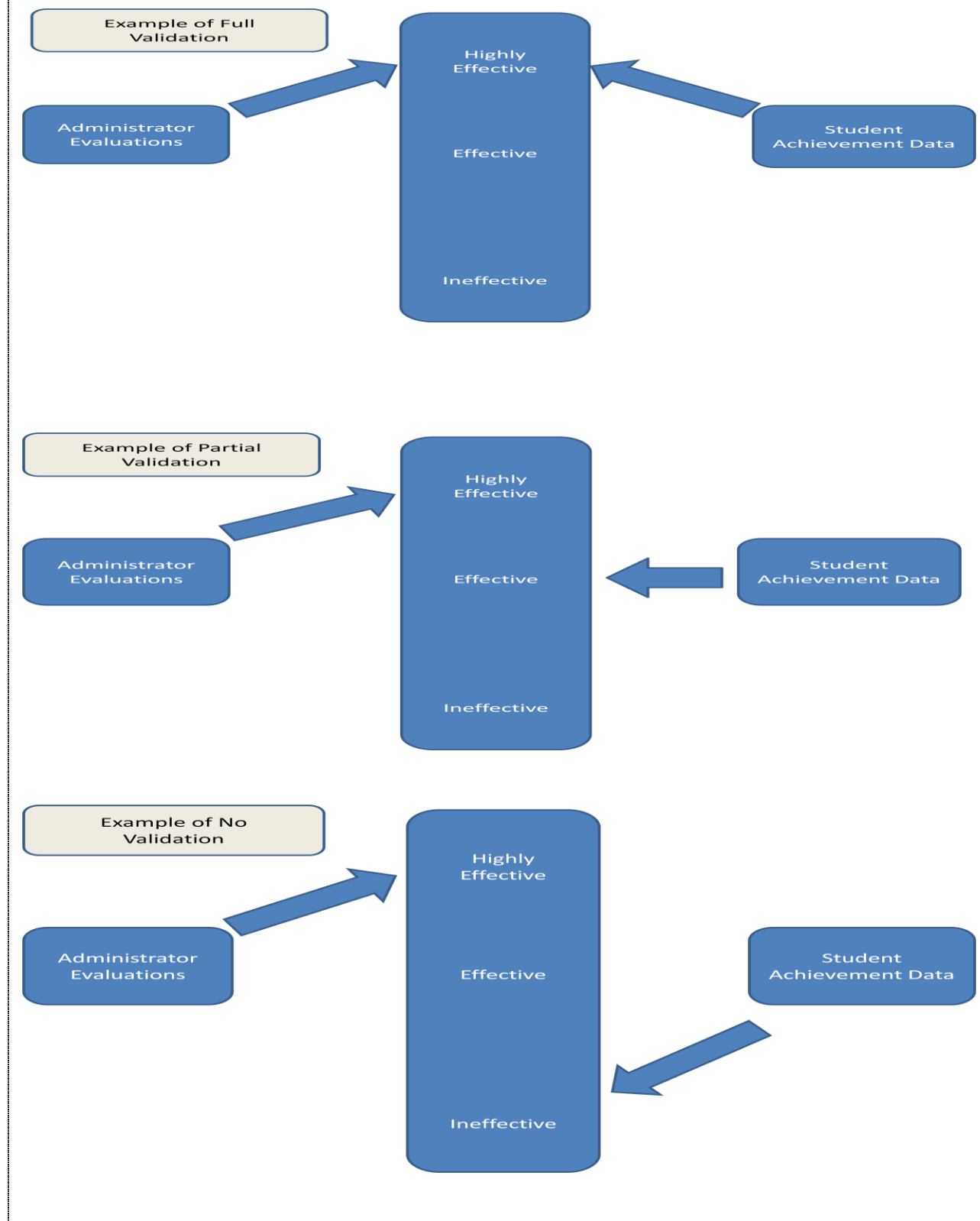
Information about student academic growth will be used by the school district, including school board members, administration, and staff, for defining student and district learning goals and professional development related to student learning goals across the school district. A school district will submit its academic growth measures in the annual report submitted pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 21, and may reference in the report state level norms for purposes of demonstrating school district performance.

The IDE will use student academic growth data to determine school improvement and technical assistance needs of school districts, and to identify school districts achieving exceptional gains. Beginning January 15, 2013, and by January 15 of each succeeding year, IDE will submit an annual progress report regarding the use of student academic growth information in the school improvement processes to the general assembly and will publish the progress report on its website.

In order to foster communication, the IDE plans to gradually implement value-added data with a three year rollout plan.

Spring 2013	Initially, value-added data will be available at the building and district level.
Fall 2013	Value-added data will be tracked at the teacher and student levels.
Fall 2014	Full implementation of value-added based on two full years of data

During the 2012 and 2013 years the IDE will work closely with districts and education stakeholders to produce specific guidelines concerning how value-added data will be used in the professional learning and evaluation of teachers and administrators. While no firm process has been established possible configurations include setting a specific percentage, establishing data goals, and working toward validation. In addition, during the first two years a validating process will be developed in order to gauge the effectiveness of the value-added data. (See Figure 3.A.1)

**Figure 3.A.1: Validating the Effectiveness of Value-Added Data**

Prior to the fall of 2014, IDE will provide guidance to the field related to how and why value-added measures will be used as a component of teacher and administrator evaluation.

It is projected that school districts will use the value-added assessment system established by IDE pursuant to Subsection 1 no later than the school year beginning July 1, 2013.

### **Iowa Investments in Administrator and Teacher Effectiveness**

In spite of shortcomings in implementation, Iowa has invested a great deal of time and resources since 2003 in order to address administrator and teacher quality. Two significant efforts illustrate Iowa's work in these two areas:

#### Iowa Teacher Quality Partnership Grant

Iowa was the only SEA awarded a federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant by Education Secretary Arne Duncan in March of 2010. The grant, for \$9,035,380.00, is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for five years. The grant creates innovation through technology which will result in a definition of effective teaching and a system for evaluation of teachers and teacher candidates based on research-based effective teaching criteria. This will create statewide change to the teacher preparation and the active teaching profession. Higher education teacher preparation programs in Iowa and across the country use the InTASC standards to assess student progress. The InTASC standards for teaching are being proposed to the 2012 Iowa legislature to replace the existing Iowa teaching standards which were developed in 2001. This change will create a unified system of standards across preparation and the teaching profession. It will also create consistent criteria upon which evaluators will determine the effectiveness of PK-12 teachers and teacher candidates across the system of education.

The mission of the Iowa Teacher Quality Partnership Grant is to increase the learning and achievement of Iowa PK-12 students by continuously developing more highly effective teachers from pre-service through the entire teaching career. The initiative will achieve this mission by 1) defining emerging attributes of effective teaching and integrating those attributes into both pre-service programs and professional development for beginning teachers and 2) examining and integrating a diverse set of teacher and student artifacts to document content knowledge of academic major and effective teaching featuring teacher work samples supported by an integrated technology platform. The purpose is to enhance and support the professional development of prospective and current teachers in Iowa.

In order to enhance the quality of beginning teachers entering the profession, the Iowa initiative provides a series of measurable and sustainable objectives that will achieve three major project goals: 1) emerging attributes of effective teaching will be examined, identified and defined in preparation for integration into a partner institution of higher education pre-service program and into partner local education agency professional development; 2) pre-service faculty will integrate the attributes of effective teaching into pre-service programs, which will be documented through prospective teacher-created digital artifacts to be placed into an integrated technology platform, and 3) partner local education agencies will integrate the attributes of effective teaching into professional development, which also will be

documented through teacher-created artifacts to be placed into an integrated technology platform.

The Teacher Quality Partnership Grant specifically identifies resources to support effective teaching for English Language Learners in Iowa schools by supporting annual training for K-12 and preparation candidates and educators through the *Our Kids* initiative.

*A key innovation* related to this project is the development and implementation of an integrated technology platform that will be used to collect and store student and teacher artifacts, in multiple formats (written, observed, video, etc). These data or artifacts will be used by the evaluator and the teacher to determine the effectiveness of teachers and their potential growth targets that will ultimately benefit student learning. This web-based system will enforce research-based design principles for performance tasks for candidates and teachers. As a result, the State of Iowa will increase teacher effectiveness at a broader scale by exposing educators and evaluators to tasks that deepen their learning of effective instructional strategies and provide feedback on their application of these strategies in the classroom. To make designing tasks more efficient and valid, this system will enable the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), a Stanford University partner in this work, to author and share performance tasks with both pre-service programs to enable improvement in those institutions, and in school districts. It will also leverage the system to certify mentor and master teachers in the design of the task and ongoing evaluation of teacher practice.

### Wallace Leadership Grant

In 2001, Iowa was one of three states to be awarded the Wallace Leadership Grant. The leadership grant was implemented through the efforts of multiple partnerships, such as School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), the Area Education Associations (AEA), the Urban Eight Network (UEN), and institutions of higher education (IHE). The major goal of the grant efforts was to develop, test and share useful approaches for improving the training of education leaders and the conditions that support their ability to significantly lift student achievement across entire states and districts, especially in high-needs schools by creating a cohesive leadership system. It was the vision of this grant to guarantee that quality leaders who will ensure that all children gain success as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, earners and citizens will serve every child in every building in every district in every AEA in Iowa. The grant worked on the premise of a theory of action that included leadership standards, training, and conditions. As a result the following efforts were accomplished:

- Establishment of six Iowa Standards and 35 Criteria (approved by State Board in 2007);
- Licensure of all beginning administrators linked to demonstrated proficiency in ISSL;
- Requirement that all leadership preparation programs be aligned to ISSL to receive approval;
- Review process for all leadership preparation programs aligned to ISSL;
- Mentoring and Induction programming guidelines aligned to ISSL,
- Evaluation of all administrators tied to ISSL with requirement for professional growth plans linked to increasing student achievement and ISSL;

- Development of model evaluation resource guides for principals, superintendents, and central office personnel contain standards, criteria, descriptors, possible artifacts to demonstrate proficiency and SMART goal samples;
- Increased numbers of hours required for clinical experience (400 hours) for aspiring administrators;
- Increased focus in preparation programs on application of the theory to the work of increasing student achievement;
- Regular professional development opportunities provided to Iowa Council of Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEA) to learn together which has resulted in a professional learning community that transcends the reality that they still are all in competition for students;
- Inclusion of ICPEA members in leadership academy work, task forces and committees, as SAMs data collectors, etc. has increased collaboration between higher education and the field resulting in more “real world” connections between higher education and LEAs;
- Mentoring and Induction Program for principals and superintendents supported by state funds;
- Mentoring and Induction Program for Assistant Principals underwritten through the Wallace Leadership grant;
- Iowa Leadership Academy programming of the Superintendents Network (using an instructional rounds model based on the work of Dr. Richard Elmore and colleagues from Harvard) and co-delivered by all of Iowa’s AEAs has 1/3 of all Iowa superintendents participating;
- Iowa Leadership Academy Principal Center in existence for three years with over 500 different principals participating—plans underway to redesign the center to focus on high school leadership teams to coincide with ICC implementation;
- UEN/DINA Central Office Redesign initiative has supported training at the local level and collectively in assisting central office staff to be leaders for school improvement, cultural competencies, data analysis, implementation of the Iowa Core and fierce conversations;
- Three years of two-day summer trainings for all AEA leaders to gain coherence about leadership standards, the Iowa Core Curriculum and 21st century skills;
- Dissemination and application of best practices rubrics for governance, data analysis, human resource allocation and financial resource allocation;
- Creation of 45 SAM/Principal teams in Iowa through a combination of Wallace support and ARRA funds;
- Policies enacted that have established leadership standards, higher education preparation program review process, mentoring and induction programs, and evaluation of administrators;
- Awareness by school boards of the important role they play in creating the conditions in which leaders work, and
- Recognition that second only to the quality of the teacher in the classroom, leadership is the most important factor that influences the level of learning for each student.

## Iowa's Process to Involve Teachers and Principals in the Teacher Evaluation Improvement Process

### Standards Revision Process

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> in 2011, a group of education stakeholders met to examine the Iowa Teaching Standards and consider revisions and recommendations for improvement.

The group included practicing and retired teachers, representatives from the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), and Iowa School Board Association (IASB). Other groups included AEAs, IHEs and IDE.

A special group of practicing teachers met on November 19<sup>th</sup> to also discuss the Iowa Teaching Standards. This group was specially convened to garner teacher input on current practices and its impact on teacher performance and development. The group also reviewed the work and recommendations of the primary task force and provided feedback for the next meeting. IDE remains committed to seeking input from the field in order to insert practicality into the decision making process. The sub-committee assembled on this day provided valuable insight to flaws within current practices and how the suggestions coming from the primary task force might help or hinder forward movement.

The charge to this committee of diverse stakeholders was to come to agreement on a recommendation for Iowa's future teaching standards (not the criteria or delineators).

1<sup>st</sup> Meeting (November 10) – Allowed individuals to discuss and comment on Iowa's current teaching standards. Conducted an in-depth look at the current standards using a set of focusing questions, reviewed additional resources on standards from other states, national initiatives, and researchers, and conducted a crosswalk of key Iowa programs.

2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting (November 17) – Allowed individuals to present any resources they wished to contribute. Several members wanted to speak to the group about the importance of and scope of the work that would be generated by our recommendation – everyone was given an opportunity to be heard. Added additional resources for review, including the InTASC Standards. Key themes and possible new standards were suggested and compared to the national InTASC Standards.

3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting (November 19) – Sub-committee of Teachers – followed same processes as delineated above. As a final process each teacher was asked to write a message they would like to send to the stakeholder group charged with making the standard's recommendation. (Four teachers who were members of the large group crossed over to this sub-committee to assure accurate information was presented and would be taken back.)

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting (November 21) – The four teachers mentioned above presented what they had heard, seen, and helped develop during the sub-committee meeting. Each of the messages written by the subcommittee members was copied and presented to the large group. A discussion ensued regarding the merits of keeping Iowa's current standards or adopting the InTASC Standards. Every member was given an opportunity to voice his or her opinion. A



decision-making ballot was presented, and the majority of the group expressed a desire to recommend a move to the InTASC Standards.

Two side issues repeatedly surfaced during the four days, so a final response form gave members an opportunity to explain their concerns and suggestions related to implementation of the standards and the transformational nature of the standards.

Full-day working meetings were scheduled for stakeholder input on the design of an evaluation system for teachers:

1<sup>st</sup> Meeting (January 31<sup>st</sup>)---The task force convened and received the initial charge concerning the development of an improved teacher evaluation system. Show Evidence, a partner with Stanford University, presented the integrated technology platform as the vehicle to connect evaluation to InTASC and Iowa's Teacher Quality Partnership Grant.

2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting (February 10<sup>th</sup>)---The task force reviewed comments and thoughts regarding the suggestion to move to frequent if not annual evaluations. The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching presented the Teacher Advancement Project model and Centers of Best Practice. The task force discussed how this might work in Iowa as well as bringing up potential barriers.

3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting (February 25<sup>th</sup>)---This meeting is dedicated to the separate sub-committee of **teachers only** to review the work and recommendations of the primary committee and in turn provide valuable feedback as well. As in the standard revision process, IDE seeks to be practical in determining next step. Input from practicing teachers helps ground the work.

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting (March 2<sup>nd</sup>)---TBD

Those invited to become a member of the task force are responsible for designing the teacher evaluation system and include leaders of statewide professional organizations, teachers, principals, higher education teacher preparation faculty, human resources administrators, and AEA consultants. This group will represent a broad range of those impacted by the teacher evaluation system both on the input and output side.

### Teacher Evaluation System Design

The next step on Iowa's plan will include forming a group to design an evaluation system and its implementation based on the new standards, with supporting criteria. A proposal for the integrated technology platform will be developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE).

- Design teacher evaluation system plan, January through March, 2012.
- Convene stakeholders who will be impacted by the new evaluation system design to give input on the development of the system and its implementation at the local level, training of evaluators, etc. These full day meetings have been/will be held on January 31, February 10 and 25, and March 2.
- Design new system and come to consensus on recommendations.
- Submit design and recommendations to IDE for consideration.
- Provide training on new system during the summer of 2013 for pilot districts.

- Fall 2013, pilot new system in multiple districts statewide.
- Collect implementation data - ongoing.
- Revisions made as needed based on data, in fall and spring 2013-2014.
- New design incorporated in to policy recommendations for legislative session, 2013.
- Policy enacted in spring of 2014 by Iowa legislature.
- July 1, 2014, new evaluation design goes in to effect officially, statewide.
- Training scaled up, statewide, for evaluators.
- All LEAs implement new evaluation design, fall of 2014.

### **Communication Plan for Teaching Standards and Evaluation System Design Work**

In working closely with our agency director of communication, a plan is in development to create a presence on the IDE website homepage, as well as information for the January 2012 School Leader Update that is distributed electronically to stakeholders statewide. In addition, other communication tools including an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document which will be continually updated as questions from the field are collected and responded to, letters to school/AEA administrators, a note to staff and a video message from IDE Director Jason Glass will also be made available to all stakeholders and the general public.

Dates are being identified for several day-long work group meetings to develop the Teacher Evaluation System Design beginning in January and continuing through March of 2012. The group will be comprised of teachers, administrators, professional organization representation, higher education teacher preparation faculty, and others as appropriate.

A representative of Stanford Center for Assessment (SCALE), a national non-profit, with whom IDE is contracting through our grant partner Stanford University and Dr. Ray Pecheone, will come to Iowa early in the development of the evaluation system design to demonstrate the electronic platform, rubric designs, and other components of the system to the work group.

In addition, IDE will bring in other national leaders and researchers on teacher and administrator evaluation that may include such people as Charlotte Danielson, Robert Marzano, and Douglas Reeves, all representatives from the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching.

The following resources serve as a guide for the task force related to the development of a state teacher evaluation model. This list is not exclusive, yet serves as a starting point:

- Teacher Evaluator Training & Certification: Lessons Learned from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project: (<http://tiny.cc/Daniels>)
- Making Teacher Evaluation Work for Students: Voices from the Classroom (<http://tiny.cc/TeacherEvaluation>)
- Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning 9 (<http://tiny.cc/Transforming>)
- The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness (<http://widgeteffect.org/>)
- Getting It Right: A Comprehensive Guide to Developing and Sustaining Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems (<http://tiny.cc/GettingItRight>)
- A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems

(<http://tiny.cc/PracticalGuide>)

- Teacher Evaluation Work Group 1.0: Report and Recommendations  
(<http://tiny.cc/WorkGroup>)

## **Administrator Evaluation Improvement**

In the spring of 2012 a task force (similar in scope to the teacher evaluation task force) representing various stakeholders including, teacher and administrator association representatives, administrators, teachers, institutes of higher education and other organizations, will convene to do the following:

- Review and make any necessary recommendations to the Iowa Standards for School Leaders,
- Consider and examine state and national models proven to effectively evaluate administrators,
- Consider how administrators maintain high standards for student growth and achievement, quality instruction, a culture of high expectations, rigor and relevance of the curriculum, and overall impact as a leader,
- Recommend a tiered performance system for administrator evaluations,
- Serve as a guide for administrators as they reflect upon and improve their effectiveness as school leaders,
- Inform higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of degree programs that prepare future administrators,
- Focus the goals and objectives of districts as they support, monitor and evaluate their administrators,
- Guide professional development for administrators, and
- Contribute to the development of coaching and mentoring programs for administrators.

The evaluation model will include an annual evaluation and emphasize the administrator's instructional capacities, organizational management, and professional growth. The model will fortify the leader's ability to inform instructional practices, provide supervision, and perform evaluations that represent both formative and summative practices.

The administrator evaluation task force will provide recommendations regarding the use of longitudinal data and school-wide academic growth data as an evaluation component along with district achievement goals and targets. The task force will recommend how these data will be represented in the administrator's evaluation. Most importantly, the task force will help to link the evaluation process with the professional growth process so that the two work in unison to inform the administrator's growth plan.

The following research related to the development of a state administrator evaluation model will be used to guide the task force:

- Evaluating School Principals (<http://www.tqsource.org/>)
- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (<http://tiny.cc/LeaderLicensure>) New Leaders (<http://www.newleaders.org/>)

- National Institute for School Leadership (<http://www.nislonline.org/>)
- Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education (<http://www.valed.com/>)
- The Wallace Foundation (<http://tiny.cc/Wallace>)

## Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in the Process

The task forces include teachers and administrators who interact daily with English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Iowa recognizes the critical nature of meeting the needs of each and every student, and this work will include the unique perspectives of those directly involved with diverse learners. As the work progresses in both teacher and administrator evaluation, feedback will be collected that includes the perspectives of teachers and administrators who interact with and teach English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

In order to solicit feedback IDE will utilize a variety approaches including:

- Posting an announcement on the IDE website seeking input,
  - Posting a survey on the IDE website,
  - Collecting comments and feedback during task force meetings, and
  - Contacting associations that represent students with disabilities and English Language Learners
- 
- Evaluation rubrics and evaluator training will address the education of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Along with the perspectives of those working with special populations, both task force groups will also seek input related to non-tested subject areas. The challenges of fairly gauging student achievement for these non-tested areas poses a significant challenge to evaluation processes and the work must readily recognize the concerns of those representing the field.

The following resources will help guide the task force in discussing student data in non-tested subjects:

- A Survey of Approaches Used to Evaluate Educator in Non-Tested Grades and Subjects (<http://tiny.cc/NonTestedGrades>)
- Measuring Teachers' Contributions to Student Learning Growth for Nontested Grades and Subjects (<http://tiny.cc/TeacherContributions>)
- Alternative Measures of Teacher Performance (<http://tiny.cc/AlternativeMeasures>)
- Measuring Student Growth for Teachers in Non-Tested Grades and Subjects: A Primer (<http://tiny.cc/StudentGrowth>)

### 3.B ENSURE LEAs IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- 3.B Provide the SEA’s process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA’s adopted guidelines.

#### LEA Implementation of Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

##### Transition to the New Evaluation Systems (See Figure 3.B.1)

The teacher task force and administrator task force, in consultation with respected experts, will provide recommendations for processes to monitor the implementation of state and locally developed evaluation models. Final strategies for monitoring the implementation process for both teacher and administrator evaluation models will be developed by IDE based on input from scholars and those piloting the models in the field. Items to be addressed will include but are not limited to, timelines for implementing an evaluation model, use of an IDE developed or approved implementation rubric/plan, adequate training of evaluators and teachers, a data collecting process that supports monitoring the effectiveness of the evaluation model, and periodic audits of LEA evaluation practices and processes.

The following timeline gives a truncated snapshot of the implementation timelines for teacher and administrator evaluation models. For a more thorough timeline please reference Appendix 3-A.

##### Transition to Improved Teacher Evaluation System

- 2011-2012 Model Development
  - Revise teaching standards and competencies
  - Define model instruments (rubrics for practice, staff/community surveys, observation tools, growth measurement tools)
  - Present recommendations to the legislature
  - Allocate funds for task force work
- 2012-2013 Model Refinement
  - Design evaluator training
  - Enhance state data systems
  - Establish IDE approval process of LEA models
- 2013-2014 Pilot Year
  - Select schools to participate in the new evaluation process and training
  - Review and revise in accordance with pilot feedback
  - Monitor initial fidelity of implementation
  - Random audits of pilot districts
  - Require SIG schools to participate in pilot using state model or approved model
- 2014-2015 Statewide Implementation

- Implementation in all LEAs
- Create opportunities for LEAs to share promising practices and challenges
- Select random districts, particularly those in the Priority and Needs Improvement (Focus) categories, for random audits
- Provide ongoing professional development, training, and support
- 2014-2016 Implementation Refinement
  - Adjust evaluation systems and strategies based on lessons learned

#### Transition to Improved Administrator Evaluation System

- 2011-2012 Model Development
  - Revise leadership standards and competencies
  - Define model instruments (rubrics for practice, district surveys, feedback tools, growth measurement tools)
  - Present recommendations to the legislature
  - Allocate funds for the task force work
- 2012-2013 Model Refinement
  - Design superintendent/evaluator training
  - Enhance state data systems
  - Establish IDE approval process of LEA models
- 2013-2014 Pilot Year
  - Select schools to participate in new evaluation process and training
  - Review and revise in accordance with pilot feedback
  - Monitor initial fidelity of implementation
  - Random audits of pilot districts
  - Require SIG schools to participate in pilot using state model or approved model
- 2014-2015 Statewide Implementation
  - Implementation in all LEAs
  - Create opportunities for LEAs to share promising practices and challenges
  - Select random districts, particularly those in the Priority and Needs Improvement (Focus) categories, for random audits
  - Provide ongoing professional development, training, and support
- 2015-2016 Implementation Refinement
  - Adjust evaluation systems and strategies based on lessons learned

#### **Process to Ensure LEA Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems are Consistent with Iowa's Newly Developed Guidelines**

An IDE review/approval process will be established for the LEA's teacher and administrator support systems to ensure teacher and administrator evaluation models are consistent with the IDE guidelines and result in successful implementation. The exact process will be part of the work carried out by the evaluation task forces. The review and approval process will be part of the piloting process in the 2013-2014 school year. Each task force will recommend a rubric to be utilized by IDE for determining LEA plan viability.

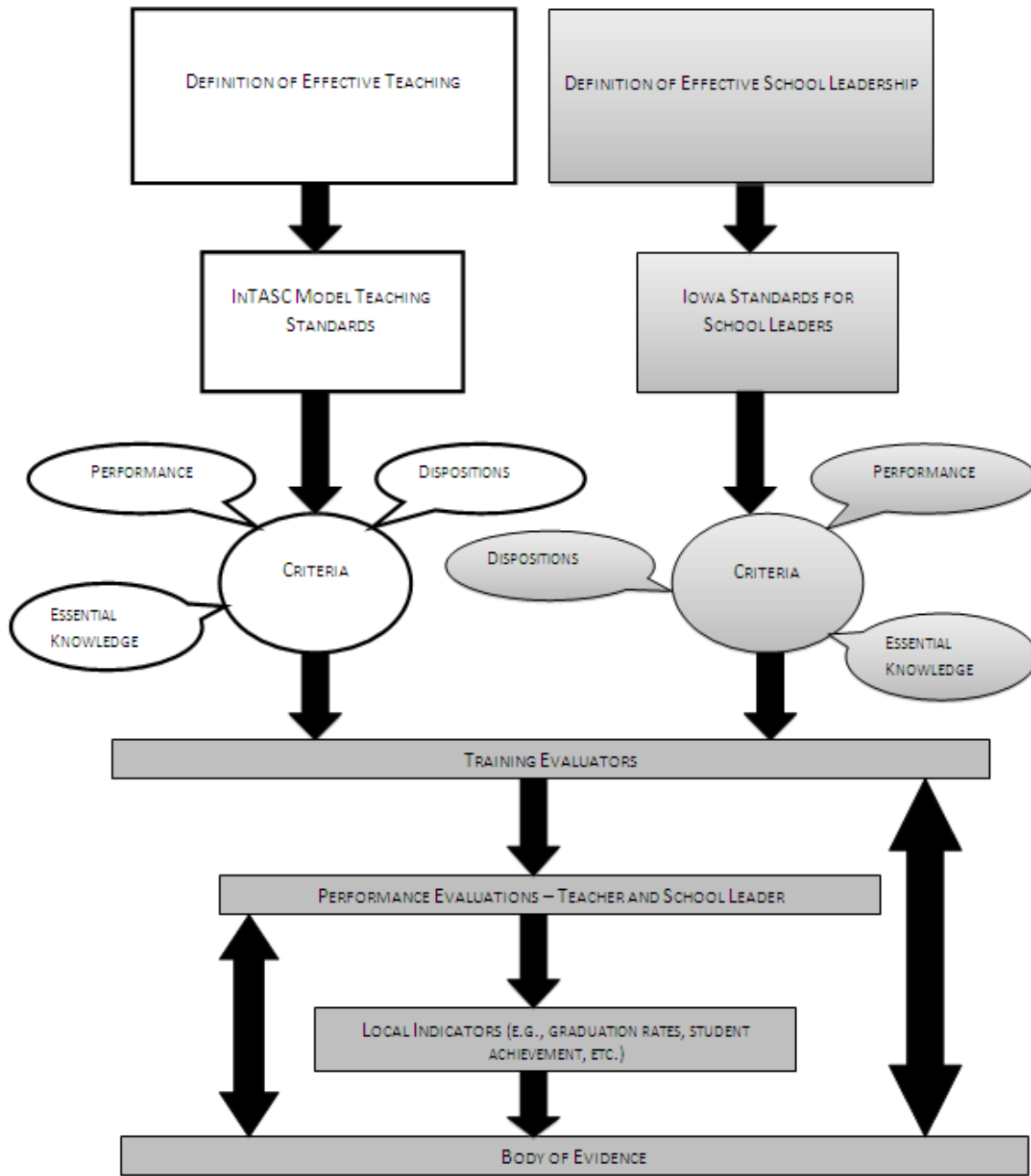
#### **Iowa's Process for Ensuring LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems with Stakeholder Involvement**



Evaluation models must have the capacity for individual input to fully garner support in the field. Iowa will delve into the task of developing guidelines and models that involve collective bargaining organizations, incorporate professional growth and align with personnel decision-making processes and procedures related to teachers and administrators.

Figure 3.B.1: Effective Teachers and School Leaders

CREATING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN IOWA—FIGURE 3.B.1



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### SAMPLE FORMAT FOR PLAN

Below is one example of a format an SEA may use to provide a plan to meet a particular principle in the *ESEA Flexibility*.

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible	Evidence (Attachment)	Resources (e.g., staff time, additional funding)	Significant Obstacles
See Appendix 3-A					